

OF MEN AND MUSIC

COLLECTED ESSAYS AND ARTICLES
(Second Edition)

BY

Mosco Carner

Author of "A Study of 20th Century Harmony," etc.

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GERALD ABRAHAM AND RALPH HILL
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PREFACE.

THIS is a collection of essays and articles written for various periodicals and magazines during the last eight years or so. Some of them were commissioned, others I wrote more or less on the spur of the moment, their subjects holding but a passing interest for me, others, again, are the result of more extensive and **more** concentrated studies which I made over a period of time, such as the articles on Puccini and Mahler which, one day, may grow into a more coherent discussion of the works of these two composers.

Though by training and inclination an executive musician, I have always found great attraction in the stylistic and historical aspects of music. Moreover, such critical studies as I made, and writing about them, have been of considerable help in my practical work as a conductor. They have, at times, acted as a corrective in my approach to questions of interpretation and style—questions every performer is bound to come up against in the course of his work.

I have made but few alterations in the text notwithstanding the fact that were I to re-write some of my early articles to-day, I would present the subject-matter in a different light. As time goes on and new experiences are added, one's views and notions of certain problems are bound to change.

I have dedicated this book to two friends to whom I owe particular gratitude for their constant encouragement and help in my early efforts to write in the English language. I also take here the opportunity of making my acknowledgments to the respective Editors of *Music and Letters*, *The Musical Quarterly*, *The Music Review*, *The Musical Times*, *The Monthly Musical Record*, *Musical Opinion*, *The Listener*, *Daylight*, and *Dvorak, His Achievement*, for their kind permission to reprint these essays and articles which first appeared in their publications. Last, but not least, I wish to thank my dear wife for her help in reading and correcting the proofs.

LONDON,
August 1944

M. C.

COMPOSERS AS CRITICS

“ L ISEZ la Correspondance de Berlioz ! Peu de livres m’ont plus édifié Il rugissait, celui-là ! et haïssait le médiocre Voilà un homme ! ” So wrote Flaubert to Edmond de Goncourt The words are significant in the valuation of the literary activity of a man whose actual métier was not the writing of criticism but musical composition. They are also equally significant for a general phenomenon that made its appearance with the dawn of the last century and which persists into our own days—the creative musician as man of letters, as exemplified by Weber, Schumann, Berlioz, Wagner, Liszt, Hugo Wolf, Debussy and Heseltine In these times when specialization is often exaggerated to its extreme limits, this type of critic-composer is undoubtedly becoming less frequent The modern conception of the ‘ objective ’ music-critic would seem to reconcile itself indifferently with such duality The *sine ira et studio* which we demand of the critic must suffer when a composer sits in public judgment on the works of others and pronounces sentence Oscar Wilde once said that “ an unbiassed opinion is always absolutely valueless ” There may be various opinions about the application of this observation to professional criticism But one thing may be considered to be well established : that Wilde’s point of view is shared by almost all the composers who have expressed their opinion upon the musical productions of their contemporaries in critical essays and articles That strongly-developed tendency in creative artists towards egocentricity, which in some cases rises (or descends) to actual narcissism (e g Wagner), often compels such natures, though frequently unconsciously, to see everything in relationship to their own creations and ideas, and to appreciate in others only what they can bring into harmony with their own personal outlook. This one-sided and irreconcilable attitude towards others frequently causes the most grotesque statements to be made, at which unbiassed readers of later times can only smilingly shake their heads, as when Hugo Wolf, for example, as critic on the *Wiener Salonblatt*, says of Brahms “ In a single cymbal-clash from a work by Liszt may be expressed more spirit and feeling than in all the three symphonies of Brahms, with the serenades into the bargain,” or when Weber in his fragmentary novel, “ Life of a Musician,” passes satirical remarks on Beethoven’s Third and Fourth Symphonies.

What strikes us most forcibly in the dicta of composers who have been active as critics is not so much the fact that they have delivered false judgments—for prophetic foresight in matters of art has ever been a rare gift—as that their manner of formulating their findings very often bares for our inspection all the character, the complexes and the warring emotions of the artistic soul. The writings of Berlioz, Wagner, Schumann and Wolf are examples of just that kind of involuntary psychological document. I am not speaking of letters, or opinions expressed in intimate circles, in which the artist can naturally unburden himself without restraint. It is in the critical writings and articles intended for the general public that we frequently discover the most remarkable, the most extraordinary assertions, which a professional critic would not be courageous or inconsiderate enough to express.

It is probably precisely this paradox—not to speak of the witty and pointed language used—that renders the reading of such criticisms so interesting and entertaining. It is less the matter than the manner that so intrigues us and brings the personality of the writer so clearly before our eyes. It would appear that the creative artist is compelled to adopt this egocentric, often very aggressive, attitude in order to retain in undiminished force the strength necessary for his own works and the conviction that his artistic ideas are right. This is nothing other than a defence. In connection with this, the observation may be made that just those composers use the sharpest and most vehement language in their writings who have to be regarded as musical pioneers, and who have influenced musical history in a revolutionary way—such as Berlioz and Wagner, two combative natures, the like of which has not reappeared in the post-classical era up to our own day.

This unconciliatory and polemic tone is noticeable not only in the writings that are intended, in the first place, for the propagation of new ideas or reforms, but also makes itself clearly felt in the articles that deal with criticism of works, composers, musical institutions, and artistic conditions generally. The bitter sarcasm and the mordant ridicule of a Berlioz, or the clever though frequently malicious judgments of a Wagner, endow their writings with a characteristic atmosphere. Nothing is spared, the penetrating, wounding bitterness of their pens knows no consideration and gives no quarter. It is as if they scented enemies everywhere, foes that cannot be fought down sufficiently. We must consider this remarkable phenomenon to be due partially to a sense of anxiety. This ever-present latent fear that the novelty and the boldness of their ideas and the revolutionary effect

of their work might not prevail or would suffer shipwreck was to be hidden or counterbalanced by increased acerbity

This anxiety concerning the issue and success of his works is present in the psychological make-up of every creative artist. To this consideration must now be added the fight against self, against the predispositions and tendencies of his artistic personality which he feels to be inimical and disturbing to his ideas. They are tendencies from which he must free himself if he is to realize in his work what we designate as new, revolutionary, or as personal style. The more daring the novel idea, the more violent will be the internal struggle, which, being projected outward at definite artistic coteries or individual persons, mirrors itself clearly in severe personal criticism and polemical writings. When Berlioz takes up arms against certain musical circles in Paris—which he calls “*musique parisienne*”—or when Wagner directs his attacks against Meyerbeer and Mendelssohn, there is naturally a certain amount of justification which can be understood on purely objective grounds. But the personal criticism which shrinks from no severity is really directed against the writers themselves, against those tendencies in their gifts which they recognize instinctively to be dangers to their artistic creations and which by strange coincidence are personified or incarnated in the “*musique parisienne*” or in Meyerbeer and Mendelssohn.

Debussy, after having been an adherent of Wagner, became one of the bitterest enemies of his works. In spite of intrinsic recognition, he turned from Wagner in the interests of French national music. He felt that he had to free himself from all Wagnerian influence before he could become the leader of French impressionism. The epithet ‘*musicien français*’ is in his eyes a rampart that will protect him from alien influences. He carries this attitude to such lengths that in his ‘*Lettre ouverte à Monsieur le Chevalier W. Gluck*’ he holds the dead composer responsible—in ironical though witty language—for the fact that “*de vous avoir connu, la musique française a tiré le bénéfice assez inattendu de tomber dans les bras de Wagner*”. With Hugo Wolf all the hatred of which he is capable is concentrated against Brahms and Dvořák. The vision of Brahms haunts him like an obsession, and the way in which Wolf drags in his name, often in totally uncalled-for situations and generally *mal à propos*, can only be described as morbid. He denied Brahms practically everything that can be denied a musician. To him Brahms is “*a remnant surviving from primitive times*”. Referring to the E minor Symphony he writes “*The art of composing without ideas has most decidedly found in Brahms its worthiest*

representative " In the case of Philip Heseltine, whose tragic figure seems to show a striking spiritual affinity to Hugo Wolf, we meet with a similar attitude in regard to Stravinsky. A more striking aversion to this composer than that demonstrated in Heseltine's article "Sound for Sound's Sake" would be difficult to imagine. It culminates in the sentence in which he says that Stravinsky's works show "in an extreme form the commonest and most unmistakable symptoms of decadence—the fear and resultant atrophy of vital instincts."

On the other hand, enthusiasm knows no bounds when the man is found in whose art and personality the critic-composer thinks he sees a close relationship with his own ideas, a confirmation of his own artistic views. The severely critical attitude is abandoned in order that words of unlimited appreciation and admiration may have unrestricted play. "Hats off, gentlemen, a genius!" says Schumann in his article on Chopin, and "this is one of the chosen, a genius!" are the words with which he greets the appearance of the youthful Brahms in 1853. Similar extravagance of language is exhibited in the article on W. Sterndale Bennett, which Schumann wrote when he introduced the young Englishman to Germany. But this enthusiasm is not only called forth by young aspiring talents whose way it is intended to smooth. Composers of the same age or older and dead masters find the same recognition, if they show the features with which the particular critic feels himself to be in complete sympathy. The talents that are personal and valuable for developing the writer's own tendencies in creative work are primarily the ones that are appreciated and admired in others. This is the explanation of Liszt's appearance in the list with a long essay on behalf of Wagner, Debussy's words on César Franck, and Hugo Wolf's struggle for the recognition of Berlioz and Bruckner. That this unconditional siding with others is not confined to courageous newspaper articles or enthusiastic essays but can also lead to results of permanent worth is shown by Heseltine in his book on Delius; and that intervening centuries need present no obstacles to the appreciation of the relationship between two composers, Heseltine also proved in the study which he published in collaboration with Cecil Gray on Gesualdo, Prince of Venosa.

It is a striking fact that most of these composers suffer in some way or other under this duality and would dearly like to rid themselves of it. It is as if they felt the antagonism between their creative and critical activity, as if they were at times conscious of the inner division thus brought about.

Very significantly Schumann says, "The best way in which to speak of music is to keep silence," and in another passage "What is a whole annual volume of a musical journal compared with *one* concerto of Chopin?" Berlioz refers to his criticism as "slavery", Debussy too does not appear to have loved this *métier* very deeply, and Heseltine surrendered the editorship of the *Sackbut* to another after a very short time. With Hugo Wolf the case is still more serious. It would seem that three years of activity as a critic had so heavily burdened his soul that he could compose nothing of any great importance during the whole of that time. The moment at which he resigned his post as critic (1887) was the commencement of the most fruitful epoch of his creative life, and as if by magic the Morike songs and most of the Eichendorff set appeared within a short period.

This division of their own personality, leading to internal conflicts—even to a tragic sequel in the case of Heseltine—is so clearly felt by certain composers that they feel constrained to give expression to it in their writings in a peculiar literary form. This consists of the introduction of fictional characters which are only separate entities of their own divided personality, and which in the form of dialogues and conversations convert the criticism into a little dramatic scene. Schumann, in his criticisms, did this very well with the figures of Florestan, Eusebius, and Raro, and explained the meaning of these three imaginary persons in the words, "Florestan and Eusebius form my dual nature, which I as well as Raro would like to mould into a man." Berlioz allows various groups drawn from the public to express their opinion when he discusses Gounod's "Faust", and Debussy invents the curious Monsieur Croche Antidilettante, a kind of double who incarnates Debussy the critic.

The problem of the composer as critic is too complicated a one to be treated exhaustively in a general article. But the fact that stands out clearly and common to all—differences in personality, time, language, and style notwithstanding—is the fundamental one that these composers employed their critical faculties to provide for themselves a source of ventilation, a safety-valve for all that concerned their own creative activity, and, above all, that their strongly marked individuality prevented them from seeing both sides of a question. Their writings do not constitute criticism in the generally accepted sense of the term. Their great biographical value lies in the fact that they form a mine of psychologically interesting character-studies, and that they often afford us a faithful portrait of the man within the artist.

JUDAISM IN MUSIC

DESPITE its title, this article has nothing to do with Wagner's notorious pamphlet. I am concerned here only with the three questions that seem to form the crux of the problem of Judaism in music. They are. First, can we speak of typically national Jewish music in the sense that we speak of typically French, English, German or Russian music? Secondly, have the Jews produced composers to whom we can apply the epithet "great" in the sense that we apply it to composers such as Purcell, Beethoven, or Verdi? And thirdly. Does the musical gift of the Jewish race lie, as has often been suggested, on the interpretative side rather than the creative?

In order to answer the first question let us for a moment consider what constitutes the elements of national music in general. Naturally, music based on the folk songs of its country is national. The growth of national schools of music in Russia, Bohemia, Spain, England, and the Scandinavian countries in the nineteenth century was chiefly due to the absorption of folk-song elements into art-music. But this criterion is not sufficient to explain, for instance, the Englishness of Elizabethan music, the Teutonic element in Beethoven's music, or the Italian in Verdi's operas. The criteria of this higher form of musical nationalism can be found only if we examine the music of a nation in all its technical stylistic aspects, and try to discover whether there is in it a certain attitude and approach, something in its general æsthetic character, that we can recognise as peculiar to, and typical of, that nation.

If we now submit the music of Jewish composers to such scrutiny, shall we be able to find traits that could be described as typically Jewish? We first have to look for the more primitive kind of national music, that is, music largely based on folk songs. There is some so-called Jewish music of this kind, notably by some Jewish-Russian and Palestine composers. But the authenticity of most Jewish folk songs is very much in doubt, as a distinction between them and the folk songs of the nations with whom the Jews happen to live, is often hardly noticeable. It is, therefore, safer to rule them

out altogether. The only genuine Jewish melodies are the old settings of the Bible and the prayers still heard in the synagogues, particularly in the East. There is a great volume of synagogical music based on these old tunes, but it cannot be considered as true art-music. For this we must turn to the music of such composers of Jewish blood as Solomone Rossi Ebreo (a famous contemporary of Monteverdi), Mendelssohn, Meyerbeer, Halévy, Offenbach, Goldmark and Rubinstein. Yet we find that there is absolutely nothing in their music showing the stylistic influence of the old Hebrew melodies. (It is true that Halévy in Eleazar's aria in his "*La Juive*," and Rubinstein in some of his songs, used old synagogical motives. But this was to add superficial local colour and cannot be compared with the conscious nationalism of composers such as Mussorgsky, de Falla and Vaughan Williams.) Nor are there typically Jewish traits in the technical style, attitude or æsthetic character of the music of these composers. Their music is Italian, German, or French—plus, of course, the individual characteristics of the respective composers, in which only the enviably imaginative can discern anything typically Jewish.

What do we find when we turn to Jewish composers of more recent times? The three outstanding Jewish musicians of the present century are Mahler, Schonberg, and Bloch. To take first Mahler and Schonberg, there seems at first glance nothing characteristically Jewish in the music of either, though a German writer has detected in Schonberg's lyricism and linear style Jewish and Oriental traits. But there is something in the attitude and æsthetic character of Mahler's and Schonberg's music which seems to me, at any rate, to reveal certain Jewish traits. Both composers show in their approach towards their art strong intellectual preoccupations and a marked tendency to the abstract. In Mahler this is, paradoxically enough, coupled with an extreme emotionalism of a very personal kind which manifests itself musically in a highly nervous intensity and an ecstatic quality of expression. All this in Schonberg heightened to the point of explosive tension. (In this connection I recall performances of the Habimah, the Jewish National Theatre, at which I was struck by the parallel between the almost unbearable emotional tension of their acting, and Schonberg's expressionism.) Would it be too fantastic to suggest that the particular technique and the æsthetic character of Schonberg's twelve-tone music is the combined result of Jewish intellectualism and Jewish emotionalism?

As for Bloch, it is true that he is much less intellectual than Mahler and Schonberg. But he shows an equally pronounced emotionalism that gives his music a specifically Jewish quality. Moreover, Bloch's personal musical idiom beginning with the "Three Psalms," gradually developed into the expression of something definitely Jewish in spirit. Bloch's music is Jewish, not because he occasionally uses old Hebrew motives or models his melodic line on them, but because his sources of inspiration are the Bible, the Jewish faith, and Jewish lore. It is only out of this spiritual world that genuine Jewish art-music can come, and unless a Jewish composer gives himself entirely up to it and lives in it as Bloch has done, his music will never bear the imprint of the true Jewish spirit. So much for the first question.

I have just spoken of the Bible, the Jewish faith and lore. These we must regard as the true national culture of the Jewish race. But it must be admitted that the unique sociological position of the Jews makes it extremely difficult for them to live in their own national and cultural atmosphere so as to become thoroughly imbued with it. So long as they are scattered over the globe, with no country of their own, and subject to cultural and other influences from the nations in whose midst they happen to live, their art will inevitably remain more or less eclectic. And this brings us to the second question: whether there are really great composers among the Jews. Eclecticism and great musical genius are irreconcilable. This may be one of the reasons why the Jews have no composer of the same calibre as the great musical geniuses of Gentile nations. There is another perhaps more important reason for that. The composers whom we call great, all belong to nations whose cultural life has shown through centuries an undisturbed continuity and freedom of development. History has denied the Jews this invaluable advantage. For almost two thousand years without a national centre of their own, it was impossible for them to lay those broad foundations of a national culture on which a nation's art stands. And if we maintain that it is in its musical geniuses that the century-old musical culture and tradition of a nation find their purest and richest expression, it becomes clear why up to now the Jews have not produced such musicians. Mendelssohn has so far been the only composer of Jewish descent who (in his early works) has come near real greatness. Even his genius soon deteriorated into mere talent, and all that remained was fine craftsmanship, so characteristic of many Jewish composers.

As for the third and last question—whether the Jews are greater as interpreters than as creative musicians—the balance seems in favour of the affirmative. For musical interpretation provides the best possible outlet for just that special quality which the Jewish race has acquired in the course of its peculiar history: mental elasticity. This, I think, accounts in the first place for the great number of excellent Jewish performers. For it is this gift which enables them to identify themselves so completely and with so much ease with the style, character, and feeling of every kind of music. That, I suggest, we must regard as the Jewish musician's compensation for his lack of great creative genius.



A PIONEER OF MUSICOLOGY: GUIDO ADLER

THOUGH the name of Guido Adler is little known to the great musical public, to musical scholars and research students it is a household word. It was Adler who some fifty years ago stood, with a few others, at the cradle of the young science which we now have come to term "musicology." He has done invaluable service towards establishing this branch of learning and causing it to be recognized as an independent subject at a number of European universities.

To Guido Adler we owe that systematic and scientific criticism of musical style which, it is hoped, will finally replace the hazy method of writing about music which is still rife among musical writers. And without Adler the monumental undertaking of the "Denkmaeler der Tonkunst in Oesterreich" would have scarcely been promoted. In these "Denkmaeler" Adler has, with the aid of a number of younger scholars, collected and edited music written in the different parts of the old Austrian Empire, from the time of the troubadours up to the period of the early romantic composers.

Adler was only twenty-five years of age when he published his first important treatise on medieval music. At twenty-six he became lecturer in music at Vienna University, side by side with the mighty Hanslick, and a few years later he founded the "Vierteljahrschrift für Musikwissenschaft," a quarterly publication of the highest scientific standard, which he edited in collaboration with two much older men, Spitta and Chrysander, the great German authorities on Bach and Handel, respectively. Thus while still a young man Adler gave proof of his exceptional gifts of musical scholarship. Like two other famous Austrians, Gustav Mahler and Sigmund Freud, Adler comes from one of those old and highly cultured Jewish families who settled in Moravia (now Czechoslovakia) and whose love of art and science provided a fertile soil and a congenial atmosphere to budding talent.

Not long ago it was my privilege to visit the great scholar at his home in Doebling, a beautiful garden-city in the west of Vienna. Close by are Nussdorf and Heiligenstadt, and in the distance the vineyards and woods of the Wiener Wald grace the landscape so beloved of Beethoven and Schubert.

Here, at the age of eighty-two, Adler lives almost completely retired from the world. I had not seen him for many a year, and as one of his former students, counting as I do the years spent under him among my most cherished recollections, I was particularly happy to be allowed to visit him. He received me with the kindness and the keen interest that delighted us when we were students. I entered his home with feelings of awe and respect, and left it with the elation one feels after a long talk with an old and wise friend. This was characteristic of Adler the teacher. He never treated us in the cold, distant manner of the "Herr Professor," but endeared himself by regarding us as equals or, in some cases, as friends.

The department of musical history (Musikwissenschaftliches Seminar) at Vienna University was his creation, and he directed and watched it for nearly thirty years until 1927. Age would not weaken his forceful personality. Even in his outward appearance he has remained much the same as in former years. "Herr Hofrat," as we called him—a distinguishing title received from the Emperor Francis Joseph I—is small of stature. His vigorous body, still full of vitality, might well deceive one as to the true age of the man. A huge iron-grey beard frames his face, and his bright clear eyes gleaming through narrow and old-fashioned spectacles testify to a surprisingly alert mind. Our conversation proved that he is well versed in contemporary thought and current events. During my brief visit we touched upon the most diverse subjects. Music naturally came foremost. Adler now devotes himself almost exclusively to his work on the "Denkmaeler" which have now grown to eighty-two volumes. Visits to concerts and the opera, in which he used to take a keen interest in order to keep in close contact with living music, have now to be abandoned as they prove too great a physical strain. The intimate contact with living music, the close and reciprocal relationship between artist and scholar, is a point to which Adler attaches great importance, and to which he referred repeatedly in the course of our conversation. In this respect he has set the best example himself. In bygone years he was on friendly and sometimes intimate terms with the leading musicians of Vienna. At his instigation, Brahms, Mahler and Richard Strauss were invited to serve on the committee responsible for the publication of the "Denkmaeler," and he also appointed Arnold Schoenberg to the post of lecturer in musical theory at Vienna University. Whilst still a young man he fought to win recognition for Wagner, with whom he was personally acquainted, and was

thus prompted to found the "Wiener Akademischer Wagnerverein" (In this he was greatly helped by Felix von Mottl, who later became famous as conductor of Wagner's operas) Another of Adler's achievements was the great Theatre Exhibition held in Vienna in 1892; he was the principal organizer and, incidentally, took occasion to introduce Smetana's "The Bartered Bride" to Vienna In later years Adler's energy and great organizing talent were chiefly responsible for the success of the great musical festival which was held in Vienna in 1927 to celebrate the Beethoven centenary

Journeys to various music congresses abroad have made Adler's name internationally known He spoke to me with pleasure of his stay in London in 1911, when he attended the congress of the International Society for Music. Here he met among others Arthur Balfour and Hubert Parry (who, by a curious coincidence, published a book on style in music in the same year as Adler) He also told me of an interesting meeting with Toscanini in Milan After conducting "Die Meistersinger," the latter asked him how he liked the performance, whereupon Adler replied. "It was 'I Maestri Cantori' that I admired rather than 'Die Meistersinger'" These words sum up in a most concise manner what so many of us find in Toscanini's readings of certain non-Italian works

These travels abroad have now ceased For, as he jestingly says about himself, "the old Adler ('eagle' in German) has grown tired of flying" All the same, his many links with other countries have remained in the form of a large correspondence with old pupils and foreign colleagues Adler has always aimed at imparting an international character to his school by keeping in contact with the research work carried out in foreign countries The best proof of this is his great "Handbuch der Musikgeschichte," in which a great number of scholars of all parts of Europe and the United States collaborated His breadth of mind is also proved by his principle of putting talent and ability above national and racial considerations His gift to discover and appreciate whatever is of artistic and historic value in the music of other nations is one of Adler's outstanding characteristics Thus his work has been endowed with a great and human quality that has become rare in these days

P.S.—Since the first publication of this article, Guido Adler died in Vienna, soon after the outbreak of the war

MODERN MUSIC IN THE BALANCE

THE many and unexpected vicissitudes of this war seem to have the effect of pushing one's peace-time memories back to a blurred and distant background. This was brought home to me once again the other day when I went through a pile of old papers and books which had to be cleared away. While I was shifting and sorting, a small insignificant-looking pamphlet fell into my hands, a concert programme, with annotations. I decided to keep it as a sort of cultural relic. It was the programme of the International Festival of Modern Music held in London in June, 1938—the last occasion when composers and musicians of many lands foregathered in a great cosmopolitan city, in a spirit of friendly competition, and the last occasion that modern music mustered its forces in a parade of imposing dimensions and before an international forum. Not many years have passed since, yet the event seems already to belong to a remote past. The war has done away with international gatherings, and if it has not done away with music altogether, it has, at any rate, put an embargo on modern music.

For one who has closely followed the musical activities of this country it is a matter of surprise to find that so little of modern music has been written or performed since the outbreak of war. Whether in public concerts or in broadcasts the modern composer seems to have lost his say. Not that he ever had, as a rule, a great share in them. Yet what share he had was fairly sufficient to form a picture of the general trend of modern music. This has now become rather difficult. That a similar situation prevails in other countries that are engaged in this war is as probable as it is depressing. We are told that modern music, with its experimental and, hence, problematical character, is not the appropriate kind of mental food for minds greatly strained and burdened by the present happenings. It is argued that classical and romantic music is more conducive to our present state of mind than the various "isms" of contemporary music. The suspicion that this kind of argument is apt to arouse is that people who think along such lines are inclined to look upon music as a sort of mental medicine to be administered only to frail and feeble minds. For such minds the medicine must be neither bitter nor strong, which modern music undoubtedly often is. The

great mass of the music public, by nature conservative and always reluctant to interest itself in works others than those of the familiar classic and romantic composers, appears to have fully endorsed that view as shown in these days by the large attendances at concerts with most unenterprising and hackneyed programmes. True, at the present time, financial considerations have an important bearing on the choice of works to be performed at concerts that are run on purely commercial lines. Yet the present neglect of the contemporary composer seems to go deeper and to point to a curious contradiction. One of the slogans of this war is that the democracies are fighting an ideological war, a war for freedom of thought and intellectual progress. Yet modern music which, in many ways, reflects the trend of modern thought, is at the present juncture deprecated and more or less ostracized. It is this contradiction between what is preached and what is practised that gives the modern musician ample food for thought. He is bound to ask himself whether the promises which modern music held out some twenty or thirty years ago have been fulfilled. In other words, has modern music been able to find that balance of means and ends of technique and expression that we justly admire in the music of the past? Does it embody new ideas, ideas that we recognize as peculiar of our times and as real and individual contributions to the general evolution of musical thought? And lastly, has modern music been able to set up a new standard of beauty and formal perfection—the supreme test of a great art?

To answer these difficult questions it is necessary to survey the field of contemporary music from an angle which is sufficiently wide to allow the observer to see that field, not as a self-contained "allotment," but as part of a landscape in which temporal and geographical, or better national, demarcation lines merge into a more coherent and organic picture. Looked at from such an angle the picture shows two main processes at work: on the one hand, the gradual disintegration and final break-up of the tonal basis on which music had stood so firmly for the last three centuries, and, on the other, the various attempts at laying fresh foundations on which to build a new and modern art. These two processes—part and parcel of an evolutionary development—overlapped yet a rough dividing line may be drawn about the middle of the first decade of our century. The years from about 1900 to the beginning of the first world war marked the end of romanticism in music and the beginning of what is commonly termed as modern music. One of the chief characteristics

of romantic music was that the accent was laid on the emotional element. Romantic music was the language of feelings and emotions *par excellence*. No other work showed the essential character of romanticism in music in a more revealing light than Wagner's "Tristan". Its intense emotionalism seemed to Wagner's contemporaries to go to the very limit of what music was able to express in the way of intense and subjective feeling. Yet this emotionalism experienced a further intensification toward the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries which, naturally enough, manifested itself with particular force in German music. There was the extreme emotional character of Mahler's "Lied von der Erde" (1908) and his Ninth Symphony (1910). There was the highly concentrated and supercharged atmosphere of Schonberg's early works, such as the "Kammersymphonie," Op. 9 (1906) and the Second String Quartet, Op. 10 (1907-08). And, finally, there was Strauss's "pathological" operas "Salome" (1905) and "Elektra" (1909), with their hysterical explosions and morbid outcries. Music was gradually made to yield every ounce of its expressive possibilities, so much so that, finally, as in Schonberg's case, a single note, a single interval, the colour of a single chord and the timbre of a single instrument gained a significance unknown to the music of previous days. As always in art, new ideas and new tendencies create their own technique or, at any rate, develop technical features of their own. In his "Tristan" and "Parsifal" Wagner had already shown how the underlying high emotional tension of those two works corresponded to an increased use of chromaticism. The consequences were far-reaching. For intensified chromaticism gradually led to an increase of the dissonances, the expansion of the orbit of the major-minor tonality and, incidentally, to obscured tonal relation. The difference between Wagner's style and that of the later German romantics was not one of kind but of degree. For the technical characteristics found in Wagner are also to be found in Strauss, Mahler and the early Schonberg, where they appear merely in a more developed and more elaborate form. True, there was a time when the Strauss of "Salome" and "Elektra" seemed a radical revolutionary, but in retrospect his style appears as essentially Wagnerian, trimmed with certain new harmonic and orchestral devices. After "Elektra," Strauss became a "reactionary" in the sense that he returned to the language of his early tone-poems and wrote romantic operas in which the modern element is reduced to not much more than a flavouring spice.

If one may say of Strauss and Mahler that they consolidated Wagner's heritage, Schonberg, a younger man, tried to break away from it. After having digested the lessons learned from Wagner, he realized that if he intended to go further in the expression of highly emotional "contents," the language of his contemporaries, however advanced it may have seemed at the time, was not adequate. Tonal relationships based on the diatonic system with its major and minor keys, the traditional law of the resolution of dissonances and the functional organization of classical harmony were all felt by him as fetters. What he was aiming at was a kind of music which, completely freed from what he regarded as impediments, should follow in the most direct, most subtle and most flexible manner the complicated, intricate, abstract and extremely concentrated nature of his musical ideas.

To create such a musical language was a process that occupied Schonberg from about the time of his Second String Quartet, Op. 10. The way to it had been shown by Wagner. It was chromaticism. Yet, whereas with Wagner and the later romantic composers chromaticism was a function of diatonicism—the chromatic note or chord being considered the offspring of diatonic parents and used to introduce a feeling of heightened tension and new colours—Schonberg gradually severed this functional link. With him the chromatic note became independent, it came of age, as it were. The result was that the system of keys and, with it, the classical concept of tonality went by the board. Closely related to this process was the change in the treatment of the dissonance. According to the classical notion, chromatic sharpening or flattening of a diatonic note creates a dissonance. Thus, the intensive use of chromaticism in the music since Wagner resulted in a corresponding increase of dissonant formations. This enormous increase in both number and degree of dissonances gradually rendered the ear of the musician less sensitive to the dissonance *qua* dissonance, the clear distinction of classical harmony between dissonance and consonance became blurred and in the event led to the dissonance acquiring the same status as the consonance, *i.e.*, it no longer required a resolution. Underlying this change was the modern concept of the relative nature of the dissonance. Thus one of the fundamental tenets of the classical theory became obsolete and a new principle of harmonic treatment took its place.

Now Schonberg, in adopting a free chromatic style, did away with the classical laws of chord building, chord progressions, the resolution of dissonances, key organization and

major-minor tonality. What determined the structure of his music were the purely colouristic and *expressive* qualities of vertical (harmonic) and horizontal (melodic) elements. We thus arrive at the expressionistic style of Schönberg's middle period, which includes such works as "Das Buch der hängenden Garten," Op. 15 (1908), the "Drei Klavierstücke," Op. 11 (1909), the "Fünf Orchesterstücke" (1909), the two operas "Erwartung" Op. 17 (1909) and "Die glückliche Hand" (1913), and the melodrama "Pierrot Lunaire," Op. 21 (1912). It is music of an extreme individualism that makes no endeavour to be understood by the *hoi polloi*, the great mass of ordinary music-lovers. It is an art for a few initiated. No wonder if this kind of music, in which the logic of its structure is so personal and subjective and so fundamentally different from that of tonal music, strikes the ordinary listener as chaotic and devoid of an intelligible meaning. It has, of course, its logic and its meaning however elusive and hidden. Seen in the light of Schönberg's later development, his expressionistic works mark a transitional phase of a more or less experimental character. They were instrumental in preparing the ground for a new style of writing, the so-called twelve-note or atonal style—perhaps the most important contribution to the evolution of modern music. It grew out of Schönberg's free chromaticism and matured in the years during and after the first world war.

Let us here pause for a moment and consider other important developments. While Mahler, Strauss and the early Schönberg were advancing in the direction in which "Tristan" had pointed, and while, also, composers of other countries were living, as it were on Wagner's heritage, there was one musician who tried to emancipate himself from the dominating German influence. This was Debussy. He had been an ardent admirer of Wagner's. But he gradually recognized the danger to French music of Wagnerian or, shall we say Teutonic, emotionalism by which the musical countries of Europe and particularly France, were swept in the 'eighties and 'nineties. He recognized it as alien and detrimental to the very essence of French character and French thought. Though technically indebted to the composer of "Tristan" and "Parsifal," he tried to oppose him by an art in which the emotional source was deeply buried and only vaguely felt in elusive and most delicate moods of the music. It was not to *express* feelings, thoughts and metaphysical ideas—which is the German way of looking upon music—it was to *mirror* those undefinable impressions and reactions which sound, light, the colour and shade of objects in nature produce.

on almost morbidly refined senses. Debussy's impressionism, this veiled and evocative art, was the very antithesis to the almost exhibitionistic emotionalism of his German contemporaries. It broke the spell of Wagner's magic. With its consummate technique of novel harmonic and instrumental devices it influenced European music at the beginning of our century to such an extent that Debussy's idiom seemed for a time to become a universally accepted language. It was the last time in the history of Western music that the individual style of a composer left an indelible mark on the music of so many different countries.

The Frenchman's cult of the purely sensuous qualities of music resulted in a technique that was found particularly suitable for amalgamation with the nationalistic tendencies of certain non-French composers such as de Falla's in Spain, and Vaughan Williams' and Delius' in England. Even German music did not entirely escape this French influence, which manifested itself in such phenomena as Schonberg's "Farbenmelodie" and the luscious "Klangstil" of Schreker's operas.

Yet despite its novelty and its great attraction, Debussy's path proved in the end a *cul de sac*. His impressionism was an idiom too personal and too limited to allow of much further development. The appeal of this primarily sensuous music reached saturation point comparatively soon. But even before it came to that, music at the beginning of our century received a new and vital impetus. It was an impetus that blew like an invigorating breeze through the hot-house atmosphere of decaying German romanticism and the morbid, over-refined nerve-music of French impressionism. It came from the tremendous rhythmic vitality of two composers—Bartók and Stravinsky. Both derived this force from the folk-music of their respective countries, Hungary and Russia. Both followed at first the line of pure nationalism which was a characteristic tendency in the music at the turn of the last century. (Incidentally, Bartók, by his researches into Hungarian folk-music, established a clear distinction between the genuine music of the Magyars and the pseudo-nationalism of the Hungarian gipsies.) But they soon began to speak their individual language, in which the national elements were happily absorbed and became, as in the case of Vaughan Williams, de Falla, and Janaček, a matter of essential thought rather than of actual substance. Yet, despite this amalgamation Bartók and Stravinsky retained the elemental and, at times, almost barbaric force of their national rhythm. The underlying nationalism of the music of these two composers resulted

in a loosening of the diatonic major-minor tonality. Modal turns, pentatonic and whole-tone scales—already used by the early Russian nationalist composers, who, in their turn, had influenced Debussy and other impressionists—the avoidance of leading-notes and so on, shook the foundation of classical tonality—a process that ran parallel with Schönberg's free chromatic style. Besides, other phenomena pointing to important developments in the music of the post-war period were gradually making their appearance, such as bitonality and polytonality—the contrapuntal combination of two and more melodies which belong to different keys and thus move on different tonal planes—and linear writing in which melodic lines are contrapuntally set against each other with little regard for the vertical result, thus leading to the most dissonant harmonic clashes.

This is in rough outlines the general picture of music during the years shortly before 1914. Music seemed to be in the melting-pot. Its changes bespoke a new feeling that was coming to the surface and was gradually altering the physiognomy of traditional nineteenth-century art. This process was characterised by a certain ruthlessness and a certain hard and uncompromising directness of artistic aims which were partly the offshoot of the realism that had been asserting itself in the late nineteenth century, partly the outcome of a general feeling that an old world was dying, the world of romanticism with its relative values, and that, perhaps, a new age was heralding itself in which plain reason, more matter-of-fact ideas and thoughts, and a more human outlook on life and its various problems would bring about a change to the better of humanity. Such ideas were behind the apparently revolutionary character of early twentieth-century literature, painting and music. The war of 1914-1918 seemed, on the surface, to put a stop to all that. But actually its effect was in the opposite direction. It undermined what was left of nineteenth-century traditions. So much so that the post-war period was expected to bring the millennium, not only for the arts but for the general political, social and cultural life in Europe.

The millennium did not come. Instead, Europe was torn between various political doctrines and creeds, particularly in the vanquished countries of Central Europe, where a generally unsettled state of affairs prevailed. The political, economical and social aspect of conditions in post-war Germany and Austria presented a disturbing picture of almost constant upheavals—the result of a feeling of deep dissatisfaction and even despair at the existing state of affairs. Music

in post-war Europe began to show a disconcerting variety of movements and schools. The various "isms" which they inscribed on their banner were but a reflection of the political and intellectual split that divided society into so many hostile camps. The music of that period was as a true expression of the "Zeitgeist." There was the music with a political message such as Weill's "Dreigroschenoper" (1928), and "Die Burgschaft" (1932), in which bourgeois society was pilloried and declared responsible for the social injustices of the time. There was "Gebrauchsmusik," utility music—a typically German variety—in which an attempt was made to provide contemporary music for the amateur and, thus, bridge the gulf between the ordinary listener and the more advanced school of writing, as Hindemith did with his "Sing- und Spielmusiken für Liebhaber und Musikfreunde," Op. 45 (1927), and Weill with his school-opera, "Der Jasager" (1930). Closely linked up with this type was the music specially written for electrical instruments, the film and broadcasting which, with the constant progress of technical inventions, are providing an ever-growing stimulus for the modern composer. The age of the machine found its "glorification" in music such as Honegger's "Pacific 231" (1924), Mossolov's "Steel Foundry" (1930)—cleverly contrived musical, or rather, unmusical, imitations of steam-engines and factories.

Yet the most important among all these tendencies was the so-called New Objectivity. It aimed at getting away from music with a psychological, emotional and metaphysical background—the essence of Wagnerian art and that of its followers—and to create "Spielmusik," music which was free of any non-musical association and was essentially a matter of weaving sound patterns for their own sakes. With its abhorrence of subjective emotion and feeling, its hatred for everything rhetorical, colourful and sensuous, with its marked tendency to simple and terse statements, this new music gradually became an abstract art and initiated the neo-classicistic style the dominant characteristic of which was a preference for the strict old musical forms such as fugue, passacaglia, suite, sonata, variations, oratorio and cantata—a reaction against the romantic forms of the music drama and the tone-poem—and contrapuntal writing. Significantly enough, the slogan at the time was "Back to Bach." Neo-classicism was the very antithesis of romanticism, both technically and æsthetically, and was typical of the general trend of music in the 'twenties and early 'thirties. The great number of composers who cultivated the new style included such figures as Stravinsky, his younger replica Prokofiev

Hindemith, Křenek, Holst and the group of French composers known for a time as *Les Six*, with Milhaud and Honegger as their most gifted members

It is true that the neo-classicistic style was an antidote against the unrestrained emotionalism of the post-Wagnerian period and in many ways a reflection of the matter-of-fact attitude of the more advanced intellectual circles. But in the long run it proved unsatisfactory, for it went to the other extreme. Neo-classicistic works tended to become not much more than a mechanical weaving of insignificant sound patterns, and the cultivation of pure objectivity and technique for its own sake often resulted in insipid and drily cerebral music. About the middle of the 'thirties a reaction began to set in which was particularly striking in the very same composers who shortly before had been subscribing to the view that the "motoric" qualities of a finger-study by Czerny came much nearer to pure and objective music than a Beethoven sonata. Thus a romantic or, better, more human, feeling was sneaking back into the music of the late 'thirties and beginning to form oases in the deserts of dry counterpoint and "non-emotional" objectivity which was as often as not the cloak for lack of intrinsic imagination.

While music on the Continent indulged in these various experiments, English musicians showed, on the whole, a more restrained attitude to radical tendencies. This was partly due to England's inherent conservatism, partly to the Englishman's markedly aesthetic approach to all matters concerning art. The older generation of British composers with Vaughan Williams, Holst and Ireland as its leading figures, as well as some of their followers like Rubbra and Moeran, made successful attempts to create a national art which was based on the old English folk-song and the great music of the Tudor composers. The younger generation, realising the inevitable limitations of a style in which conscious nationalism was so predominant, emancipated themselves and followed a less restrained and more international line, such as Bliss, Walton and Bush. Even Vaughan Williams was affected by this continental trend in the more recent British music as witness his *Symphony in F minor* (1935) whilst the youngest British composers, like Britten and Berkeley, are steering a wholly international and eclectic course.

In this constant ebb and flow of more or less short-lived tendencies which make the picture of European music during the 'twenties and 'thirties so diffuse and complex there was one firm rock. This was the Viennese school of atonal composers. Whatever one's view on the music of this school,

one fact stands out beyond dispute that Schonberg and some of his disciples have shown a consistent and continuous development in one and the same direction. They succeeded in creating a truly *new* music which was entirely free of the eclecticism noticeable in other contemporary movements. I have already referred to Schonberg's free chromaticism in the works of his middle period, which led to a gradual destruction of all the essential laws of tonal music. I said that it was music of an extreme individualism. And so was its technique. So much so that to the outsider it seemed unintelligible and inchoate. Now Schonberg realised that, if there was to be a further development of his style, the new laws that, consciously or unconsciously, guided him had to be formulated and clearly laid down. In other words, a rationale of the atonal technique was necessary. It was not until the early 'twenties that Schonberg evolved what he called "composing with the twelve notes". This system—revolutionary and radical in appearance but actually the logical corollary of his free chromatic style of earlier years—was founded on the tone-rows, *i e.*, series of notes containing all the twelve chromatic notes. Every composition must be based on such a tone-row, which may be regarded as the "key" and at the same time the thematic reservoir from which to derive motives, themes and harmonies. As the tone-row is a purely melodic or horizontal element it follows that twelve-note music is primarily contrapuntal or linear, its vertical aspect, *i e.*, harmonies, being chiefly determined by the movements of the parts.

It would be little use to discuss in a general article the details of this abstruse and complicated technique of composition. But this much may be said, that twelve-note music has opened up a number of technical possibilities which still wait to be fully explored and exploited. Moreover, it has greatly added to the purely expressive qualities of music; works such as Schönberg's Fourth String Quartet, Op. 37 (1939) and Berg's "Wozzek" (1925), his "Lyrische Suite" (1927) and the Violin Concerto (1935) show the high degree of intense and concentrated lyrical expression that can be achieved in twelve-note music. Much as its structural and general technical aspects present a fascinating study to the intellect, it is on the plane of a most expressive lyricism that this music has given us new and intrinsic aesthetic values.

And what of music's future? To predict the effect the present war will have on further developments is well-nigh impossible. One fact is, however, certain—political events of a radical nature do seriously interfere with the free and

unhampered growth of music This has already been proved in peace-time For instance, in the so-called totalitarian states, music, like everything else, has become *gleichgeschaltet* Germany, once one of the leading musical nations, has, in accordance with her general principle of stifling and destroying every progressive and advanced intellectual activity, declared modern art as "cultural bolshevism." German composers are nowadays writing music in which the cult of the German folk-song combined with a dull and antiquated kind of nineteenth-century romanticism, has led to results as insipid as they are insignificant So far, the theory of 'blood and soil' has most miserably failed to beget anything but musical nonentities Even in present-day Russia, with her generally progressive ideas, the modern composer is forced to conform to such aesthetic rules as laid down by the political authorities and write music whose chief criterion lies in its appeal to the great proletarian masses Here, too, the artistic results, with a few exceptions, have not been very encouraging Politics and music do not seem to go well together, at least not when music is lowered to the rôle of a handmaid of often short-lived political propaganda whatever its aims This however, does not imply that the modern composer should not seek his inspirational sources in political ideas and events Politics, in their broadest sense, affect nowadays every aspect of life, and it would be contrary to every psychological law if in his work the artist would not respond to them, consciously or unconsciously Yet from the point of view of aesthetic evaluation it is a matter of indifference where an artist derives his inspiration from It is the translation, or, better, transformation, of an originally non-artistic stimulus into purely artistic terms by which the work of the artist must be finally judged It is the purely artistic result that counts This, I believe, is the only reasonable answer that can be given to the vexed question of politics and music (I have allowed myself this short digression because the above issue has of late become a much-discussed topic among contemporary composers.)

As I said before, to indicate the course of music's further development is impossible The trends of modern music during the years between the two world wars have been too erratic and contradictory to venture a safe forecast Yet would it be too much to hope that, if the outcome of the present struggle leads to the New Europe as envisaged by the best minds among the democratic nations, music and the other arts will, in time, perhaps, show a more homogeneous and more coherent picture, and achieve that standard of true beauty and formal perfection of which I spoke at the outset?

IN DEFENCE OF PUCCINI

THERE was a time, not so very long ago, when the subject of Puccini was taboo among the so-called serious musicians. to confess to a sneaking liking for his music was tantamount to cultivating a taste for the low and meretricious in art. Slush and sentimentality, librettos that conformed to the standards of the penny-dreadful and the cheap erotic novel, a shameless exploitation of hoary stage-tricks. such and more was said in condemnation of Puccini's operas by the musical mandarins of a generation or so ago. Oddly enough, the strongest anti-Puccinian phalanx was to be found in the composer's own country where it was headed by the powerful Torrebranca, a critic who thought it worth while devoting a whole book to the subject, a book in which the unhappy composer was pilloried and pulled to bits in the most scientific fashion. What is the position to-day? The hostile pamphlets have wandered into limbo and the unfriendly cliques have disappeared. What has remained is Puccini's music, most of it as fresh and spontaneous to-day as it was when it first conquered the world.

Some of us may for temperamental reasons still dislike it. For there is no denying its predominantly sentimental character. It is certainly no food for the purist. And those brought up in the tradition of the "Musikdrama" and all it implies cannot help picking holes—and quite large ones at that—in the fabric of the Puccinian opera. But there is one great thing that cannot be overlooked. Puccini's operas are theatre *par excellence*. An inborn dramatic instinct, a keen sense for the imponderables of the stage, an almost unfailing power to write music that fits the action as a glove fits the hand, and last but by no means least a rich vein of warm lyrical invention: this is, in a nutshell, the secret of Puccini's operatic art. Add to it big rewarding parts which for their perfect rendering call for that rare bird the singer-cum-actor, swift-moving scenes full of action, dramatic tension and suspense, and brilliant orchestral writing, and you have the explanation of the fact that out of the twelve operas Puccini wrote, at least half a dozen are among the mainstays of every big opera house. Of how many modern operas can the same be said? Strauss was the only one among Puccini's con-

temporaries who rivalled him in that respect Of the works of his Italian contemporaries, the Catalanis, Cileas, Franchettis Mascagnis, Leoncavallos and Giordanos, none was able to hold our attention for very long, with the sole exception of the veristic twins "Cavalleria" and "I Pagliacci" which, for all their merits, reach neither the craftsmanship nor the musical quality of "Tosca" and "Il Tabarro"

Thus Puccini remains the only successor of any calibre of his great compatriot Verdi Verdi was his starting-point and for ever his operatic idol True, Puccini neither had his great commanding personality nor was the "radius of dramatic action" of Puccini's operas as wide and full as that of Verdi's, but within his limitations, his power to move and to carry the spectator with him was equal to that of the composer of "La Traviata" and "Otello" What earned him his "bad" reputation was his strong bent for the markedly erotic type of opera. the chief protagonist of ten of his operas is the woman His was a special type of woman, the little creature of frail femininity whose whole *raison d'être*, as Puccini saw it, was love, without which she must perish It is true that in this Puccini continued a line that had started in French opera with Gounod, Thomas and Massenet Yet it was the Italian who developed that operatic type to perfection by adding an at once realistic and more individual note Even in his "Turandot," in which Puccini succeeded in getting away from the little-woman idea, a last vestige of his natural bent remained with the figure of Liu to whom, significantly enough, he gave the best and most moving music of the whole opera (An even greater significance attaches to the fact that this character was the composer's, not Gozzi's, creation) To have blamed him for his peculiar predilection was as stupid as it was beside the point The theatre is not a moral institution, and no matter what kind of subject is brought on to the stage, its sole criterion is its dramatic propriety and its artistic handling In Puccini's case it was the subject, with a special type of woman as heroine and charged with a tense erotic atmosphere, that provided the spark for his musico-dramatic inspiration and that resulted in most successful works for the stage.

Yet there was more in Puccini than the successful musical *raconteur* of the amorous lives and love tragedies of Manon, Mimi, Cho-cho-san, Tosca, Angelica and Giorgetta With two masterpieces, "Gianni Schicchi" and "Turandot," he revealed new facets of his operatic genius His excursion into Florentine comedy came as unexpectedly as that into Chinese

fairy tales (The parallel with the "new" Verdi of "Otello" and "Falstaff" is worth noting.) "Gianni Schicchi" was perhaps the more startling of the two as its light-handed and witty treatment and the champagne-like sparkle of its music seemed so far removed from the usual Puccinian domain of sentimental love stories with their full-blooded and passionate music. In "Turandot" he returned again to a partly tragic love-story, but it moves no longer on the more or less commonplace erotic plane of his sentimental operas. What Puccini had in mind when he cast about for a new subject and lighted upon Gozzi's play was, in his own words, "to try new paths." These new paths led to a work in which the composer not only reached the consummation of his technical mastery but achieved something that had seemed to lie beyond his powers: a style of expression that was at once virile, heroic and grandiose. With "Turandot" Puccini wrote a work that can be mentioned in a breath with Verdi's "Aida" and "Otello." True, it shows signs that the composer's melodic inspiration was no longer as fresh and spontaneous as it used to be, there are enough traces of laborious work. Yet in its rare combination of sustained passionate passages (Turandot and Calaf), of most moving lyricism (Liu) and of delightful comic relief (Ping, Pang, Pong), all tinged with beautiful exotic colours, it shows the hand of a master.

But Puccini was not only a master of his craft. He was more than that: he was an individual musical personality. And this despite the more or less eclectic nature of his technique. In his musico-dramatic treatment he takes a leaf or two out of both Wagner's and Verdi's scores. He adopts a pseudo-symphonic method by occasionally using leitmotives and working them into a simple homophonic texture. His chief method of building up a musical scene is to construct a mosaic of small melodic units, a device which he uses so skilfully that it produces the effect of a constant and spontaneous flow, as in Liu's first aria and the concluding chorus of the first act of "Turandot." In his harmony he keeps abreast of his time. He is as much at home in Wagnerian chromaticism as he is in the colour harmonies of the French impressionists and the feasts of dissonance and polytonality of the last post-war period. (See the opening of the first and second acts of "Turandot.") Above all, he has a rare gift of absorbing all these heterogeneous elements and fusing them into a language entirely his own.

This applies particularly to his lyrical phrase. There is no mistaking its individuality. Passionate, ardent, spon-

taneous and full of *morbidezza*, it is specially in the expression of mental pain, suffering and emotional fatigue that Puccini's lyricism reaches its highest degree of poignancy and beauty. Here Puccini created a new type of operatic melody, the melody that in a forcible screwing-up of its line reaches the climax only with an effort, and then gradually drops down in exhaustion, as is most beautifully shown in the duet between Mimi and Rodolphe in the last act of "La Bohème," in Cavaradossi's passionate outburst shortly before his execution and Liu's moving appeal to Turandot. Here Puccini is at his best, his purest and his most individual.



THE FIRST VERSION OF 'MADAM BUTTERFLY'

THE fortunes of the operatic composer are like those of the gambler seated at the gaming-table. Neither can ever be sure whether his next stroke will be a lucky one. The fate of the operatic composer lies in the hand of that curious crowd of people, the operatic public,—a public so different from any other audience, and fickle and disloyal as the ladies of whom *Rigoletto's* duke sings in his famous song. Take, for instance, "*La Traviata*." Verdi, when he wrote it, was already very popular in Italy, and had, shortly before its production, two resounding successes to his credit. Yet the first performance of this opera was a dismal failure. Or think of Bizet and his "*Carmen*." The composer's reputation seemed fairly established on the slippery ground of the musical world in Paris when the first production of "*Carmen*" proved such a fiasco that it is said to have contributed to his death soon after. In our century, the most notable instance was "*Madam Butterfly*." After the triumphs of his "*La Bohème*" and "*La Tosca*," Puccini was more certain than ever of the success of "*Butterfly*." Yet the opera by which he had set so much store suffered at its first performance an almost complete defeat.

To-day, "*La Traviata*," "*Carmen*" and "*Butterfly*" are most popular operas and the mainstay of every operatic company. The initial failure of the first two seems, in retrospect, to have been due hardly to any real shortcomings in the works themselves, though at the time critics and public pointed to this and that scene as being dramatically ineffective and musically poor.

What was actually responsible for their condemnation were objections of purely temporary and relative validity. The real trouble lay with the novelty of the plots, their realism, and the questionable character of their heroines, never before shown on the operatic stage, deeply shocked Verdi's and Bizet's contemporaries. In the case of "*La Traviata*," all this was made to appear worse by the contemporaneity of the story and its atmosphere. Now, these objections no longer held at the time "*Butterfly*" was written. Realism and the treatment of contemporary problems on the stage were then in full swing; and naturalistic

opera, ushered in by Bizet and developed into verism by Leoncavallo, was the fashion of the day. Cho-cho-san's *hara-kuri* was nothing but a new variation on the well-tried veristic theme of brutal murder on the opera stage*. Nor could any serious exception be taken to making a *geisha* the heroine, for courtesans, adventuresses and demi-mondaines had already been admitted into the fold of operatic "society". And the exotic atmosphere of Japanese life, unusual as it was (it had been introduced into opera only shortly before "Butterfly" by Mascagni in his "Iris," 1898), was an attraction rather than a source of disapproval. To explain the initial failure of "Butterfly," we have to look for something else. This is its first version in which it was given at Milan (February, 1904), for it is significant that when the opera was again produced in a revised form at Brescia three months later, its success was spontaneous and complete.

Now, what are these revisions like? At a first glance they do not seem to amount to much, but on closer examination, most of them are found to be important and necessary. To begin with, the first version, though originally planned in three acts (this conformed to Belasco's play of the same name, on which the libretto was based), consisted only of two. Puccini's argument, as he said in a letter to Giulio Ricordi, was that "the drama must run to its end without interruption,—tense, effective, terrible. In casting the opera in three acts we were courting inevitable failure." Thus acts two and three—they were the same as in the present version—were telescoped into one, the beautiful chorus of humming voices leading without break into the orchestral interlude which now opens the third act of the present version. For once, Puccini's unfailing sense for the balance of acts failed completely, for not only was there now a striking disproportion between the lengths of the first and second acts—the former lasting about fifty-five minutes, the latter about ninety minutes—but the second in itself was too long. It seems that here Puccini forgot his Italian public, who (in contrast to the German) is very sensitive to *longueurs*. (Verdi was very conscious of this, and the consideration he paid to the time factor in his operas is shown by his remark to the critic Monaldi that the first act of his "Otello" lasted forty-two minutes, "two minutes more than necessary.") By the time the opera got to the orchestral

* Even Verdi did not entirely escape the influence of this movement, as witness the strangling-scene in his "Otello."

interlude, the audience became tired and inattentive. so that much of what is now the third act was received indifferently. In his revision, Puccini went back to the original plan of three acts, concluding the second act with the above-mentioned chorus. This is the form in which the opera is usually produced to-day *

Another serious shortcoming of the first version was the overcrowding of the first act with scenic details which tended to retard the action. It is a general characteristic of Puccini's dramatic style that practically all the first half in most of his first acts is given to an elaborate painting of atmosphere and local colour, while the action proper does not set in until the second half †. This impressionistic trait he derived from the traditional opera comique. But he sometimes went too far in this direction. What there is of action in the first act of "Butterfly" that is essential to the development of the drama, boils down to the wedding of the two lovers. For the rest, the act consists of atmosphere-painting and the big lyrical section of the love duet. Both are static, and hence retardatory. Whereas in the present version of the act these are well balanced with more dynamic elements, in the first version there is too much room given to an almost ethnographic description of the Japanese setting. This is particularly the case in the scene after the arrival of Butterfly with all her various relatives. Her enumeration, characterisation and introduction to Pinkerton of these people, the serving of Japanese refreshments and Pinkerton's comment on them and other little details, amusing as they may be in themselves, slowed down the action to a considerable extent. The same applies to the episode with Butterfly's uncle, the drunkard Yakusidé, to whom Puccini originally gave a short scene of his own in order to heighten the comic note of the wedding ceremony. It was probably to this part of the act that an Italian critic's advice for "many and courageous cuts" referred, and the composer heeded it, as shown in the revised version, where the above scenic details have been either completely eliminated or reduced to a

* I have seen German productions, however, in which hardly a break was made between the second and third acts. The curtain, to be sure, came down after the concluding chorus, but the music, after a minute's interruption, went on to the orchestral interlude, the auditorium remaining dark throughout.

† Only in three out of his twelve operas (viz., "La Tosca," "Gianni Schicchi" and "Turandot") does Puccini plunge into the action right from the opening of the first act and gradually, as the plot unfolds, works local colour and atmosphere into it.

minimum. Similar excisions were made in the scene of Butterfly's make-up (second act), and of her later preparations for the suicide.

One cut, however, seems to me amiss. This is in the love duet of the first act, when Butterfly tells Pinkerton that she first recoiled from the thought of marrying him because he was "a foreigner, a barbarian." These lines, which are left out in the present version, hinted at the deeper meaning of Butterfly's tragedy and must have been all the more telling in the context in which they occurred.

Besides these cuts, there are other alterations, notably in the scene with Kate Pinkerton (third act). To introduce Pinkerton's American wife and make *her*, as was done in the original, ask for Butterfly's child at the very moment when the geisha realises that Pinkerton has callously betrayed her, and that her own life is now finished, was a piece of most sadistic cruelty and utter tastelessness withal. This was smoothed down in the present version by making Sharpless put the demand for the child while Kate now appears only for a very short moment, with only one or two sentences to this insignificant part.*

So much for the principal revisions of the libretto. The next question is whether the score has thereby been materially affected. Most of the music that thus went by the board consisted of material used also in previous and later scenes, and was not, in my view, worth retaining. Nor was the excision of Yakusidé's music, with a new motif, a regrettable loss. Moreover, those cuts obviated the criticism of Puccini repeating too frequently the same motifs, some of which were reminiscent of "Manon Lescaut" and "La Bohème." The musical revisions also included one or two alterations in Butterfly's vocal part made for the sake of a more effective line, and a few new additions. Thus Pinkerton's part in the last act, small as it is there, demanded more lyrical interest than it possessed in the original version. It was, therefore, enlarged by the addition of the arietta, "Adio fiorito asti."

In comparing the two versions on paper, the difference may not seem very striking. But on the stage, with its subtle laws of weight, balance, timing and "spacing" of scenes, Puccini's revisions went a long way. They most probably saved the work from remaining a "near miss."

* This alteration was actually made at the instigation of Albert Carré, the director of the Paris Opéra Comique, where "Butterfly" was produced in the autumn of 1906.

THE TWO 'MANONS'.

OF the four operas based on Abbé Prévost's famous "Histoire de Manon Lescaut et du Chevalier Des Grieux" two have only survived in the modern repertory Massenet's "Manon" (Paris, 1884) and Puccini's "Manon Lescaut" (Turin, 1893)* To judge by the number of performances, the French work seems to enjoy more popularity with the general public than the Italian On the other hand, many musicians prefer the latter It will, therefore, be interesting to see how these two operas compare with one another and, incidentally, to find out how far Massenet influenced Puccini, his junior by sixteen years

Before doing so we must consider what Puccini was up against when he decided in 1890 to write an opera on the subject of Prévost's novel His skill as an operatic composer was comparatively slight Both his "Le Villi" (Milan, 1884) and "Edgar" (Milan, 1889) had been failures from the dramatic point of view, whereas Massenet had already proved in his earlier works, such as "Le Roi de Lahore" (Paris, 1877) and "Hérodiade" (Paris, 1881), that he was a most skilful dramatist To compete with the famous Frenchman by choosing the same story for an opera was undoubtedly an audacious enterprise on the part of Puccini, all the more so as the characters, not to speak of the whole atmosphere of Prévost's novel, are so typically French Of that Puccini was well aware, and he tried to overcome the difficulty in the only reasonable way—by seeing his characters with an Italian eye and avoiding, as far as possible, any similarity with Massenet's work When he asked the playwright Marco to make him a libretto from Prévost's book the latter reminded him of Massenet Puccini replied

"It doesn't matter Then both of us will set it to music The subject fascinates me I feel I could make a good thing of it He (Massenet) will feel it as a Frenchman, with the powder and the minuets (*con la cipria e i minuetti*) I shall feel it as an Italian, with desperate passion (*con passione disperata*)" †

* The two others are "The Maid of Artois" (London, 1836) by Balfe and "Manon Lescaut" (Paris, 1856) by Auber The first to use this story for the stage was Halévy in his ballet "Manon Lescaut" (Paris, 1830)

† "Puccini" by G. Adam (Milan, 1935) The future tense suggests that Puccini had not yet heard Massenet's work.

That the adventurous love story of Manon and Des Grieux appealed very strongly to both of them as a subject ideally suited for opera is no wonder if we remember their common predilection for libretti with a markedly erotic atmosphere and the particular type of frail woman as the leading figure. The dramatic schemes of the two libretti however, are quite different. Massenet was anxious to show Manon from various sides as the girl at the start of her life, the sweetheart of Des Grieux, the mistress of a rich man, the seducer of Des Grieux, the depraved woman and the creature punished by disaster. The predominant feature of Manon as shown by Massenet is her coquettishness, her intriguing charm and her fatal love of pleasure and amusement, a love which eventually leads her and Des Grieux to catastrophe. Puccini's figure is a much "heavier" and more melancholy type, a woman of strong emotions and passions, reminiscent of some of Verdi's heroines of "amore e passione". In comparison with Massenet's fuller and more varied picture, Puccini's Manon has only one colour.

Des Grieux is in both operas portrayed in very much the same way as a weakling, 'un caractère ambigu, un mélange de vertus et de vices, un contraste perpétuel de bons sentiments et d'actions mauvaises' (Prévost). The third main figure, Lescaut, a sort of gangster in uniform, and the secondary characters are treated more individually and interestingly in the French work. And Massenet's librettists, by choosing or inventing characteristic scenes, have managed to show the gradual moral decline of the two lovers much better than Puccini's, who, to avoid any similarity, left out all that happens in Massenet's second, third and fourth acts and, incidentally, deprived their story of many excellent psychological points. Meilhac and Gille have, for that matter, painted their characters and situations on the whole with more subtlety and sureness of touch than Puccini and his four collaborators, whose names, by the way, do not appear in the printed score.*

In the choice of scenes painting the local colour and atmosphere of the period, Massenet follows the old tradition of the *opéra comique*. A very striking example of this is furnished by the first scene in Act III, the "Promenade du Cours-la-Reine," which allows the composer to introduce

* They were Marco Praga, Domenico Oliva, Luigi Illica and Giulio Ricordi, the music publisher.

a ballet in the old French style, an almost indispensable requisite of French opera. From the point of view of drama this scene is superfluous, but in itself it is a vivid period-picture.

This characteristically French device of the tableau with local colour and atmosphere—an early example of literary and musical impressionism—is also adopted by Puccini in *Manon's* levée in the second act. In a more developed form this technique of operatic tableau is employed in his next opera "*La Bohème*," particularly in the second act, "*Montmartre*," which seems to be modelled on "*La Promenade du Cours-la-Reine*" of Massenet's work. Yet Puccini never allows his fondness for painting the background to interfere with his sense of drama as Massenet did. His levée is comparatively short and more of an introductory character, whereas Massenet gives an elaborate picture of considerable length. This and other examples, such as the scene before the inn in the first act, or that of the gamblers in the fourth act, tend to slow down the dramatic action in Massenet's opera in contrast to Puccini's swifter sequence of dramatically effective scenes. Puccini also concentrates more on the two leading characters than Massenet, who on the other hand gives Lescaut and the secondary characters wider scope.

The *routinier* Massenet chose for his third and fourth acts scenes that are particularly telling because of the environment: the parlour of St. Sulpice with its religious atmosphere as the background to a passionate love-scene and the gamblers' den in the *Hôtel de Transylvanie*. It cannot be said that this was a very original choice, scenes of a similar nature were part of the stock-in-trade of French opera in the nineteenth century. On the other hand, Puccini achieved with the embarkation act what is not only the most unusual but also perhaps the most original situation of all his works. This tense and highly impressive picture is a dramatic stroke of the first order and creates a most pathetic effect of tragedy. It is probably correct to assume that Puccini here collaborated considerably with his librettists, as it was on his continuous urging that the original third act became the second in the present form of the opera and was replaced by "*una situazione drammatica, travolgente, pittoresca*," as he said himself*.

* A comparison with the short and quite unimportant episode in *Prévost* shows that Puccini, by very simple means, fundamentally altered its original meaning.

To my mind this act represents the dramatic climax of the whole opera. If Puccini had wanted a tragic ending like *Prévost* and *Massenet* he would have done far better to end with this third act, for what follows is an anticlimax endangering the dramatic effect of the whole opera. Though full of beautiful music and Puccinian "fingerprints" (to use *Ernest Newman's* expression), the act is practically devoid of any action and drags on in an endless *lamento*. We know from Puccini's later works that scenes of torture, pursuit or slow death particularly stimulated his imagination, or, as he called it jestingly himself, his "Neronic instincts". *Manon's* death scene is the first of this kind. But the musician has here pushed the dramatist entirely into the background. This act would find its proper place in a dramatic cantata, it is unsuited to an opera. But it is probable that Puccini played a leading part in its elaboration from the short scene in the novel, a passage almost free from sentimentality (We know that *Johnson's* pursuit in "The Girl of the Golden West," a scene essentially similar in character to *Manon's* and *Des Grieux's* flight through the desert, was Puccini's own invention). *Massenet* grappled with the rather undramatic episode far more successfully by introducing the scene of *Des Grieux's* frustrated raid on the guards who are escorting *Manon* to the port. This gives his last act some interesting action and shortens *Manon's* death scene, much to the advantage of the whole act.

There is no room here to compare the two libretti in detail. One point, however, is worth mentioning: the style of the language. *Massenet* uses for the greater part of the opera an easy, fluent, conversational language, the flow of which is made easier still by the use of spoken dialogue, a characteristic feature of *opéra comique*. Puccini's treatment is different. The text is *durchkomponiert* and the language, owing to its passionate character, is heavier and slower-moving.

The same remark applies, on the whole, to the music. *Massenet* calls his work an *opéra comique*, while Puccini terms his a *dramma lirico*. This gives us an indication of the difference in their musical treatment of the story. In accordance with the general style of *opéra comique* in the second half of the nineteenth century, *Massenet* mixes tragic and comic elements. We find sentimental and pathetic melodies of a sustained kind mingled with short and graceful melodic snatches, pointed and flexible rhythms and quick *parlando* passages. *Massenet's* skill in combining these contrasting

elements is remarkable, but on the whole his inspiration is neither rich nor very original. Everything is done with much taste, but there is little in it of genuine passion.

In no other opera did Puccini show again this almost Schubertian wealth of melodic inspiration. One can speak, indeed, of a literal *embarras de richesses*, for in certain passages a short and characteristic phrase would have better served the dramatic purpose than this rich flow of lyrical melody. In comparison, Massenet's melodic resources appear rather limited. But the Frenchman uses them more economically and with a surer sense of character-painting. In this particular point his lightness of touch is especially noteworthy, whereas Puccini is rather lacking in it and his *parlando* phrases are too often in the nature of a slow-moving *arioso* (He acquired all these typically French qualities very soon after, as his next work "*La Bohème*" proves). Yet influences of the *opéra comique* and particularly of Massenet himself already manifest themselves in Puccini's work: witness Des Grieux's so-called *madrigale* in the first act or Manon's minuet and arietta in the *levée* scene in the second act, or the rather frivolous *chanson* sung by the lamplighter in the third act. In melodies of a melancholy and sentimental character Massenet's "phrase décadente" is easily recognizable. In his harmony Puccini shows himself much more original and interesting than his rival. His use of chords of the seventh, suspensions, chromatic alterations, surprising modulations, both chromatic and enharmonic, makes Massenet's harmonic vocabulary appear rather poor and commonplace. Certain progressions in the Italian work, particularly in the symphonic interlude between acts II and III and the great love scene in Act II, can be traced back to "*Tristan*."

Both composers made use of Wagner's *leitmotiv* technique, the Frenchman more consistently perhaps than the Italian, who even in his later works was none too rigid in its application. One should also mention the use of so-called "reminiscence motives" associated with characteristic situations rather than with persons. This is an old device to be found very frequently in *opéra comique* in the eighteenth century. Massenet used it in the final scene in a very subtle manner, while the dying Manon murmurs her last word to Des Grieux, the orchestra plays the opening bar of her song in Act I. Puccini took the hint from Massenet and did the same thing with the opening bars of the minuet from the second act, to remind us of the pathetic contrast between the splendour of Manon's past life and her miserable end.

THE TWO 'MANONS'

In general the French work is, from the point of view of the operatic stage, more mature, richer in variety of scenes and of greater technical skill. It is the work of a great *routinier* who knew how to cater for public taste; its music is always entertaining and sometimes moving. But the entertainment value is the principal one. In that respect the young and less experienced Puccini is far inferior. Where he scores heavily is in the warmth of his music and in the wealth of his melodic and harmonic inspiration. The comparison of the two "Manons" shows that as a musician, pure and simple, Puccini was by far the more gifted of the two.



PUCCINI'S EARLY OPERAS.

I

WITH the first performance of his "Manon Lescaut," on February 1st, 1893, Puccini not only completely fulfilled the expectations he had aroused in his compatriots, but far surpassed them. The mere fact that a young composer, hitherto unknown outside his own country, had laid hands on a subject Massenet had treated with such success nine years or so before said much for Puccini's artistic daring. With "Manon Lescaut" he placed himself in the first rank of Italian opera composers after Verdi. In it we can see the stylistic foundations on which his later work was built. Although much of it is still bears the stamp of *Sturm und Drang*, and although the dramatic sureness and technical mastery of the later works is reached only in part, "Manon Lescaut" nevertheless contains *in nuce* practically all the traits characteristic of Puccini's mature style.

This opera marks the decisive turn in his development towards the form of "lyric drama" prepared in France chiefly by Gounod and Thomas and developed by Massenet, which was to find in Puccini its outstanding Italian exponent. Naturally this change did not take place suddenly. I have already spoken of the expectations aroused by him. These expectations were the consequence of two operas that preceded "Manon Lescaut" by several years. "Le Villi" and "Edgar." These two early works are interesting and enlightening in more ways than one. They were written at a time when traditional Italian opera was passing through a stylistic crisis brought about by the fight for and against the principles of Wagnerian music-drama, "Le Villi" and "Edgar" are in a sense documentary records of the tendencies noticeable in Italian opera in general during the last third of the nineteenth century. They are also important for the study of Puccini's own operatic style, for they show the outside influences which he later threw off altogether or else transformed into his own personal media of expression. At the same time these two operas show definite traits, particularly in melody, which are typically Puccinian and, in later works, where they are refined and purified, actually form the most valuable part of his work.

II

The period 1870-90, then, was a disturbed one for contemporary non-German opera. The two standards around which the battle was fought in Italy bore the names of Verdi and Wagner. Wagnerian principles had made their way over the Alps and quickly found support. Even Verdi himself had not entirely evaded their influence. But what in his case was only a clever turning to account of selected elements (e.g. the declamatory principle), which did not affect the individuality of his style, took the form of a frank partisanship for and against traditional Italian opera among the younger composers. The chief of these revolutionary spirits was Arrigo Boito, about whom the young Wagnerians had flocked after the favourable reception of his "Mephistofele" in 1875. Catchwords such as "polyphony" and "symphonism" were used as battle-cries, and it really seemed as if the eternal principle of Italian music—the "singableness" of operatic melody—was going to be sacrificed to Wagnerian *Sprechgesang* and the predominance of the orchestra over the stage.

Things were pretty much the same in France, though there the conflict was less violent, for Meyerbeer's influence was still perceptible in French grand opera and the lyrical-sentimental style came to full bloom in the operas of Gounod and Thomas. Still, Bizet was strongly suspected of being a Wagnerian, though actually he was not more indebted to Wagner than Verdi was. Admittedly the use of the "Carmen" theme as a sort of *Leitmotiv* throughout the opera and the rich colouring of the often quite symphonically handled orchestra (with the consequent heightening of the drama) can be traced back to Wagner. But "Carmen" was the very work which both by its music and its libretto showed the way of escape from the symbolism and metaphysical problems of Wagner's operas and led to a new operatic style altogether.

With "Carmen" the naturalism of Zola and other contemporary French writers was brought on to the operatic stage. Everyday life, personified in this case by the figure of a woman of doubtful reputation, here made its way to a region from which it had hitherto been excluded.*

*Though to a certain extent this had already happened in Verdi's "Traviata," based on "La Dame aux Camelias," by the younger Dumas, which, in its turn, is partly a fresh treatment of some of the features of Prévost's "L'Histoire de Manon Lescaut et du Chevalier Des Grieux."

"Carmen" is one of the foundation-stones of the later Italian *verismo*, represented chiefly by Mascagni, Leoncavallo and—to a certain extent—Puccini. The full effect of "Carmen" (1875) was not felt in Italy till 1890, when Mascagni headed the reaction against the unworldly, symbol-laden Wagnerian type of opera with his "Cavalleria Rusticana." Thanks to the glowingly passionate if brutal and primitive language of his music and to the realism of the plot, he contrived for a time to silence the Wagnerian disciples and to pass as the pioneer of a new operatic style.* It is into this interesting period of cross-currents—Wagnerian music-drama, the Italian opera of Verdi, the lyrical, sentimental *genre* and the realism of the French (which so quickly invaded Italy too)—that Puccini's first operatic essays fall.

III

Before I deal with the librettos and music of these two operas I must briefly sketch the history of their origin, on which a certain amount of fresh information has come to hand during the last few years. In 1883 the Milan publishing house of Sonzogno advertised in the "Teatro Illustrato" a prize competition for the best one-act opera of the year (Seven years later Mascagni's "Cavalleria" was brought to birth by the same means.) For the young Puccini this was the first and best chance of experimenting with an opera and at the same time earning money—which he at that time badly needed. Through his former teacher and paternal friend Amilcare Ponchielli, the composer of "La Gioconda," he was introduced to Ferdinando Fontana,† who prepared for him the libretto of "Le Willis" (afterwards italianized into "Le Villi") based on an old German legend. The time

*Italian literature also began in the 'eighties to turn from romanticism to a realistic style (Carducci, Stecchetti, d'Annunzio), closely related to musical realism or *verismo*. Arnaldo Bonaventura ("L'opera italiana" Florence, 1928) pertinently describes this change of ideas and the appearance of a new style in opera in connection with the general cultural tendencies, when he says "That of the young school was, so to speak, a collective movement determined by the conditions of the time, of literature and of dramatic art. Heroes, historical figures and romantically passionate characters are succeeded by figures taken from bourgeois life and from the humbler classes of society, and an attempt is made to give living, warm, natural, sincere expression to their doings, their vicissitudes and their little intimate dramas. The public were tired of hearing new operas more or less expertly worked out, but cold, anaemic and lifeless."

†Journalist and author of a number of opera-librettos and realistic dramas

allowed for sending in entries for the competition was very short, so that Puccini had to work under tremendous pressure and actually sent in his score at the last minute. The work did not appeal to the jury at all and was not even mentioned in their published report. The prize was awarded to Guglielmo Zuelli* for his "La Fata del Nord" and to Luigi Borelli for his "Anna e Gualberto," which were both produced at the Teatro Manzoni, in Milan, 1884.

There is some suspicion—not altogether unfounded—that the jury did not even trouble to examine Puccini's work. For according to the composer's own statements later and to Adam's description,† the score had been so hastily and illegibly written that it was almost impossible to make out the notes—to say nothing of forming any judgment of the quality of the music. (The same had happened six years earlier with Puccini's cantata "I figli d'Italia bella," written for an exhibition in his native town of Lucca.) Not long after this setback Puccini played part of "Le Villi" at the house of Marco Sala, a rich Milan music-lover. Among those present was Arrigo Boito, who was so enthusiastic about Puccini's first-born that he determined to get it performed. With the help of Fontana, who as librettist was naturally also very much interested, as well as Boito, Ponchielli and other friends, the 450 lire necessary for the copying of the parts and for the costumes were got together. Giulio Ricordi, head of the great publishing firm, agreed to print the libretto gratis, and on May 31st, 1884, the opera was at last produced at the Teatro dal Verme in Milan.

Puccini's one-act opera—styled *opera-ballo* because of the witches' dance introduced into it—was given with two other operas, "Jone" and "La Contessa d'Egmont," and won a success such as was not expected even by the composer. The immediate result was that Ricordi bought the opera for 1 000 lire—"the first thousand-lire note in my life" as Puccini used to say jestingly in later years—and moreover gave him a contract for a new full-length opera on a libretto also to be written by Fontana. On Ricordi's advice Puccini recast "Le Villi" as a two-act, full-length piece, in which form it was given on December 26th at the Teatro Regio.

*Later director of the Conservatorio at Parma and composer of several successful operas and symphonic works. After Puccini's death, Zuelli himself admitted that "Le Villi" was a much better work than his own prize opera.

†G. Adam, "Puccini," Milan, 1935.

Turn * Thus began Puccini's lifelong connection with the house of Ricordi, which published all his operas except the ill-fated "*La Rondine*."

"*Le Villi*" afterwards disappeared from the repertory, owing partly to the immaturity of the music, but still more to the deficiencies of Fontana's libretto. As he said himself,† a fantastic subject—"un argomento fantastico"—seemed to him the most suitable for the young Puccini, and he therefore concocted a "book" on the lines of the opera plots of Weber, Marschner, Spohr and even Wagner. The old German legend on which it is based is said to be well known in the Black Forest. According to it the souls of maidens who have been abandoned or betrayed by their lovers appear in the forest at night as the "*Wilde Jagd*" ("Wild Hunt") and dance the faithless one to death, thereby redeeming their own wandering souls. The mysticism of the German forest, the ghost element, witch dances, and the idea of redemption—omnipresent in Wagner—are all heaped together in Fontana's libretto, but they mean very little to the Italian mind.‡ The characters Fontana places in this utterly un-Italian atmosphere are moreover mere lifeless, conventionally drawn figures without a spark of individuality. That Puccini, who was afterwards most rigorous in his choice of subjects and towards their dramatization, set such a libretto can be explained only by the circumstance that he was completely inexperienced in the matter and wanted at all costs to write an opera for Sonzogno's competition.

Unluckily for him he was bound by the contract with Ricordi to set another libretto by Fontana, who in "*Edgar*" presented him with something that far surpassed the book of "*Il Trovatore*" in confusion and the heaping-up of dramatic impossibilities. As the basis Fontana used Alfred de Musset's bombastic drama "*La Coupe et les lèvres*," one of his worst works. The idea of the plot, which takes place in Flanders about 1302, is the hoary one of the triangle, the man between

*An English version of it was produced under the title of "*The Witch-Dancers*" in Manchester, September 24th, 1897.

†G. Adam, "Puccini."

‡How strong the influence of German romanticism was at one time in Italy may be judged from the fact that not only Puccini but a number of other composers—Alfredo Catalani with his "*Loreley*" and "*La Wally*," Antonio Smareglia with "*Cornelius Schutt*," Alberto Franchetti with "*Asrael*" and "*Germania*"—succumbed to it sooner or later.

two women—always a good subject if handled in the right way. The weakling Edgar cannot make up his mind whether he is in love with the pure and chaste Fidelia or the wild and seductive Tigrana (note the “characteristic” names), to whom he presently succumbs. After various adventures he returns penitently to his Fidelia, who, however, is stabbed by the vamp Tigrana in revenge. What Fontana was obviously aiming at was an amalgam of elements from “Tannhauser,” and “Carmen,” all most successful operas. Fidelia, the pure angel, waits like Elizabeth for the prodigal lover, the mixture of chivalry with gypsy romanticism, of military scenes and burblings, is in the tradition of “adventure operas” like “Il Trovatore”, the figure of Tigrana, a sort of devil in woman’s form, reminds one of Carmen, as Edgar does of Don José.

It is noteworthy that with the more or less naturalistic stabbing scene at the end of the opera, Fontana for the first time gave the composer an opportunity for “realistic” music. This scene is a counterpart to the *crime passionnel* that brings “Carmen” so brutally to its end. But the lack of a logical plot, the psychological and dramatic discrepancies, the almost marionette-like characters, drawn in a black-and-white quite untrue to life, and last but not least the empty, sham pathos of their language, are to blame for the failure of the opera when it was first produced at the Scala on April 21st, 1889. That this work—in later years spoken of by the composer himself as a *cantona* or “blunder”—nevertheless reached a relatively considerable number of performances after various alterations had been made in accordance with Ricordi’s suggestions, is due to Puccini alone, with the force of youthful inspiration he contrived in many passages to breathe into his music that warm humanity which one seeks in vain in Fontana’s libretto.

IV

Now what is the music of these two operas like? It is obviously marked by numerous weaknesses. Nevertheless a study of its style brings to light some important points which on the one hand show the coming master’s connexion with tradition and the conventions of his time and on the other unmistakably point to his future mature idiom.

Neither the supernatural romanticism of “Le Villi” nor the false heroic pathos of “Edgar” was really congenial to Puccini’s personality. Consequently in those passages where these elements are particularly marked his music

remains conventional and uninspired. The concerted pieces and choruses are particularly stiff and wooden. "Le Villi" is still a "set-number" opera with self-contained arias, romances and duets in the old style. In "Edgar," too, the skeleton of set numbers is still perceptible, though here under Wagner's influence the separate pieces run into each other without a break and so result in a more effective dramatic continuity. In the strict sense of the word Puccini's Wagnerism did not last long. With "La Bohème" it ended for ever if we disregard, of course, those lasting influences which the *Musik-drama* had in general on the post-Wagnerian opera in non-German countries. Yet in those years of Puccini's *Sturm und Drang* it was hot and intensive. In addition to certain choral passages in "Le Villi," reminding one of Weber's "Freischütz," German influence is perceptible (by comparison with Verdi) in the greater use made of the orchestra for a dramatic underlining of the action, in the admittedly—not consistent—treatment, in the manner of the *Liedmotiv*, of various important themes; and in the long orchestral preludes, interludes and postludes reflecting the psychological course of the stage action in the Wagnerian way. A good example of this is the postlude to Robert's big aria in the second act of "Le Villi." After an outburst of despair the excitement gradually ebbs, giving way to a mood of weary resignation expressed in the orchestral postlude. I quote only the last ten bars.

EX. 1 Andante mosso



Similarly the orchestral interlude between Acts I and II of the same opera points very clearly to Wagner. This piece, entitled "L'Abbandono," is intended to depict symphonically the events between the two acts, i.e. to tell the listener of the faithless desertion of Robert's bride, Anna, and of her death, at which point a funeral chorus is heard behind the

curtain * Already in this piece one notices the exalted, sensitive cantilena of the later Puccini with its typical, excited triplet passages, passages which became a characteristic trait of the true verists (to whom Puccini does not entirely belong) Both this piece and the one that immediately follows it—"La Treggenda" ("The Wild Hunt"), a rather tame witches' dance in tarantella rhythm, though with interesting harmonic features and somewhat reminiscent of "Carmen"—are prefixed in the score with rather childish verses, which Puccini originally intended to have recited before the curtain However, this piece of bad taste was never carried out

These two intermezzi are notable in yet another respect : they called forth a letter from Verdi to Ricordi in which the master, then seventy-one years of age, uttered a warning against a preponderance of the symphonic element in opera and in pregnant words stated his whole attitude towards opera † "L'Abbandono" from "Le Villi" also left its mark on the well-known intermezzo in Mascagni's "Cavalleria" (Many so-called "Mascagnisms" turn out on close examination to be fruit from Puccini's tree)

The harmonic style of Puccini's two early operas is marked by Wagnerian traits, too, such as the free use of appoggiaturas, passing notes, chords of the seventh and ninth, pronounced chromaticism and enharmonic writing The frequent appearance in "Edgar" of the so-called "Tristan" chord



both in its original form and in inversions is striking But there is more than mere imitation in all this : many passages sound already a personal note, *eg* the following typically Puccinian chord progressions in Anna's aria from the first act of "Le Villi," and in Fidelia's arietta from the first act of "Edgar"

*In a letter of August, 1883 to his mother, Puccini speaks enthusiastically of the libretto of "Le Villi," saying among other things that it particularly pleases him as it gives him a good many opportunities for symphonic-descriptive music.

† "I have seen a letter speaking very highly of Puccini He follows modern tendencies, of course, but sticks to melody which is neither ancient nor modern It seems, however, that the symphonic element predominates in him—though there's no harm in that Only it's necessary to go warily in that direction, opera is opera and symphony, symphony, and I don't believe in introducing symphonic passages just for the sake of giving the orchestra a chance to let fly."

'Le Villi,' Act I, from Anna's aria

EX. 2(a) Andante lento



'Edgar,' Act I, from Fidelia's arietta

EX. 2(b)



(Harmonic skeleton)

On the other hand, the diminished seventh—that antiquated maid-of-all-work of the older opera—still plays a part in the dramatic recitative when it is necessary to express passionate excitement. But on the whole Puccini's rich harmonic vocabulary distinguishes him from most of his contemporaries even in these two early works and shows tendencies that later—enriched by elements from French impressionist and exotic music—became typical traits of his personal style.

V

Puccini's leanings towards French music, which became more and more noticeable in later years, are perceptible already in the 'eighties. not so much towards grand opera à la Meyerbeer as to the lyrical-sentimental genre ("Faust," "Mignon," "Carmen," etc.) The big choral scenes, the grandiose requiem, and the mixture of the religious and the profane in "Edgar" are no doubt derived from Meyerbeer, and Fidelia's great aria with its overdone coloratura bears the unmistakable stamp of the later Meyerbeer.

EX. 3



(Note here the filling out of wide leaps.)

PUCCINI'S EARLY OPERAS

Elements from *opéra comique* include the frequent dotted 2-4 rhythms in chorus and ensembles with graceful, appealing melody, the military marches and the interpolated *chansons* and dance-songs ("Edgar")

The following pages point directly to the particular build of the Carmen theme .

EX.4(a) CARMEN Theme



'Le Villi', Act II, from Robert's aria

EX.4(b)



'Edgar', Tigrana Theme

EX 4(c)



The structural identity is obvious at once . an agitated tremolo sustaining the harmony, beneath which a short, concise motif, *ff*, is repeated, varied and treated sequentially. The expression of intense agitation and a certain brutality are unmistakable in these themes. In technique and expression these three cases are model examples of the "agitated" melody of the later veristic operas of Mascagni, Leoncavallo, Giordano, Cilea, d'Albert, Schillings, Charpentier and many others Here, too, the build of certain Wagnerian *Lestmotive* may have helped to point the way.

Again in lyrical-sentimental cantilena, Puccini betrays a close relationship with the French. I give three typical beginnings of arias, from which the features common to the lyrical-sentimental type can be studied closely :

'Faust,' Faust's Cavatina

EX 5(a)



Carmen', Don José's Flower-song

EX 5 (b)



'Edgar', Act II, Edgar's aria

EX 5(c)



The following points become clear. In each case—and one could adduce innumerable similar ones—a movement in the melodic line begins to develop but soon comes to a standstill. The movement begins with crochets, quickens to quavers and is then arrested on the minims. (The frequent feminine endings are also characteristic.) What is the significance of this slowing down and stopping of an unfolding melody? Psychologically it is the expression of a feeling that lacks the power to stretch out in a long melodic sweep, that soon loses energy and rests before a fresh effort. There is a constant ebb and flow, a continual feeling of *crescendo* and *diminuendo*, within quite narrow limits. The whole gamut of that rather insipid feeling which we commonly call “sentimental” is expressed in this style of melody. (Note also the meaning of the words.)

But Puccini would have been no Italian if he had wholeheartedly followed the French in this style of melody. A close analysis shows that the rhythm and, very often, the choice of intervals in the French melodies is determined by the verbal accent and the natural inflection of the words. The French are extraordinarily sensitive to such points. But this sensitiveness and most careful observation of these points has a hidden danger: it makes it difficult to invent a melody free from the bonds of the words, a *cantilena* of which the rhythmic and melodic flow is purely musical and not determined by the text. The nature of the Italian language, however, has made this sort of opera melody possible. In Verdi's operas, for instance, it pours out unhindered, despite correct declamation and accentuation. Its first principle

PUCCINI'S EARLY OPERAS

is "singableness" In "Aida" and the Requiem this type of *cantabile* melody reaches its highest perfection

In this respect Puccini, despite his French tendencies, continued Verdi's practice * But only in a certain direction. It is not the Verdi of heroic passion, of magnificent gestures, of lofty pathos, but the lyrical Verdi of "La Traviata," of the last act of "Aida," the Desdemona passages of "Otello" and of certain passages in the Requiem to whom Puccini is related. The passages quoted below, the finest ideas in Puccini's two early works, are first-rate examples of this *cantilena*.

'Le Villi', Act I, from the prayer
EX. 6(a) Andante mosso



Edgar, Act III, from the requiem (13)
EX. 6(b) Lento triste



The *cantabile* nature of these passages is due to the stepwise, diatonically progressing main line of the melody and the utmost avoidance of a chromaticism that would break or bend it. In the above examples the main melodic line describes the following sections of the scale



I believe that one of the secrets of Italian melody lies in its simple build, *i.e.* in its underlying diatonic scale, which is disguised by melodic and rhythmic figurations. In this type of melody Puccini was the heir to a long tradition of

*Verdi significantly spoke of him as the "Keeper of the Seal of Italian melody"

Italian music But the tunes quoted are given a typically Puccinian stamp by two specific features: the rising sequence of two-bar periods (marked ★) and the interval of the falling fifth (marked |—|) It should be noted that the melody itself tends very clearly downwards and Puccini unconsciously tries to counteract this tendency by making the sequence rise These sequences have the effect of a forcible screwing up of melody which would much rather fall

This latter tendency is intensified by the interval of the falling fifth which occurs seven times in the first example and six times in the second The falling fifth has always had a definite effect of finality, particularly as a cadential step in the bass Puccini seems to transfer this cadential step to the melody itself But instead of being reserved for the fourth or eighth bar, the falling fifth appears in almost every bar, with the consequence that this constant cutting off of short phrases and the continual fresh starts give his melody a character of weariness or limpness which is very often intensified by the minor key of the tune There is something spineless and neurasthenic in it And so Puccini becomes the composer of a particular type of melody, the "tired" melody It is his most personal creation and embodies perhaps his finest ideas.

The fact that this is apparent even in his youthful compositions is significant of the psychological basis of the whole of his work As may be seen from the following examples from more mature works, some of his best melodies are marked by this "tired" character.

'Bohème', Act I, from Mimi's aria

EX. 8 (a)



'La Bohème', Act III, from Mimi's aria

EX. 8 (b)



'Tosca', Act III, from Cavaradosi's aria

EX. 9

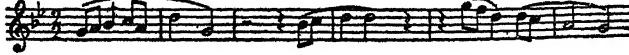


PUCCINI'S EARLY OPERAS

'Madame Butterfly', Act III, from Butterfly's song
EX. 10



'La Fanciulla del West', Act III, from Johnson's song
EX. 11



'Turandot', Act I, from the introductory chorus
EX. 12



One or the other of the features mentioned above—the diatonic scale curves, the falling tendency, the dropping fifth, the sequence and the minor key—are noticeable here too. They are what an English critic very aptly terms the “finger-prints” of the Puccinian *cantilena*.

Though “Le Villi” and “Edgar” are probably dead as far as the stage is concerned—nevertheless I would recommend the first work to amateur societies*—they contain plenty of interesting material for the student. Old and new, borrowed and individual characteristic features here lie side by side, more easily recognizable than in the later works, where they are melted into an organic whole.

*It requires only three soloists, a small chorus and ballet, is comparatively easy to perform and possesses numerous musical beauties.

PUCCINI'S ONLY SYMPHONIC VENTURE : THE 'CAPRICCIO SINFONICO.'

LIKE most operatic composers, Puccini tried his hand in other fields of composition before he reached that stage of maturity in which he was able to express himself in the medium that best suited his specific gifts. Coming as he did from a family of musicians, who for four generations had written music chiefly for the church, it was only natural for the young composer to follow this tradition at first. He actually began his musical career as organist at a church in Lucca, his native town, and at the age of nineteen or so wrote a mass, motet, and a cantata. But his eventual career was decided by his move to Milan, where he entered the Reale Conservatorio di Musica in the autumn of 1880. This city, then the most important musical centre of Italy, offered him plenty of opportunity to satisfy that very keen interest in opera he had shown ever since he had seen a performance of "Aida" in Pisa some years before his Milan days.

Yet there was some other music besides Italian and French opera that was to influence him for a time. The symphonic music of the German romantics was gradually being introduced into the concert halls of Milan and other places and excerpts from Wagnerian operas in particular aroused the enthusiasm of the younger generation. Especially the students at the various music academies came under Wagner's spell, and catchwords such as "symphonism" and "instrumental polyphonism" were used by the young Wagnerians as battle cries against the old, traditional school of Italian composers. Antonio Bazzini, a well-known composer of the time, and Puccini's director at the Conservatoire, though belonging to the older generation, was himself a great admirer of German music. Thus, Puccini was subjected to the influence of German music both inside and outside the Conservatoire. The first fruit of this influence was an exercise which he wrote in the spring of 1883, at the conclusion of his three years' course at the Conservatoire and which bore the significant title "Capriccio Sinfonico."

There is a peculiar history attached to this work. At its first and only performance in the Conservatoire (July, 1883) under Franco Faccio, a famous conductor of the time, the

"Capriccio" was extremely well received. In a discussion of the work, Filippi, the well-known critic of the *Perserveranza*, called its author "un deciso rarissimo temperamento musicale, specialmente sinfonista." After this success, the "Capriccio" was to have been given in one of the concerts of the La Scala Orchestra, but this performance did not come off, and the work was never played again. Nor was it published, the orchestral parts having been copied from the only manuscript score (now at the Puccini Museum in Torre del Lago). Yet the widow of the publisher, Francesco Lucca,* a patron of the young composer, published in 1883 an arrangement for piano duet by a certain Giuseppe Frugatta. Copies of the arrangement are now entirely out of print, but I was fortunate enough to discover one at the British Museum, a copy that served me as a basis for a critical examination of the work.

Before coming to this, however, it is relevant to ask why Puccini never agreed later to the publication or a performance of the "Capriccio." It may be that the mature composer felt an aversion from this early work. Yet he had no reason to feel ashamed of it. For the freshness and naturalness of the music, particularly of the melodies, does the highest credit to a young composer. The best outside proof of that was its very successful performance. Undoubtedly, the real reason for Puccini's resisting any suggestion in later years to have the "Capriccio" published is the fact that he had borrowed in a grand, almost Handelian manner, from it for two of his later operas. Not only did he take the theme of the "Bohemians" with which "La Bohème" opens, from the "Capriccio"—this has already been discovered by Specht and other people who had access to the autograph—but he also incorporated a whole chunk of it in the requiem music in the third act of "Edgar," his second opera (produced in Milan in 1889). This second "self-plagiarism" is on a far larger scale than that in "La Bohème," yet, curiously enough, up to now it has escaped the notice of all biographers.

It is obvious that Puccini disliked the notion of his borrowings becoming known, for this may have had serious consequences. The Italian musical public is notorious for its extreme sensitiveness to repetitions, reminiscences, and involuntary self-quotations. (Puccini was to have a very unpleasant experience of this when the original two-act version of "Madam Butterfly" was hissed in Milan in 1904.) To make any discovery of his borrowings impossible, the

*This firm was bought up by Ricordi in 1888.

composer even went so far as to ask for the score of his "Capriccio" from the library of the Conservatoire where it had been kept, and never returned it. This was about the time when he had started work on "La Bohème". Considering his rich gift of genuine melodic invention, it will always remain a puzzle why Puccini ever resorted to these borrowings at all.

Now what is this "Capriccio Sinfonico" like? It is Puccini's only independent orchestral work of any importance.* Its form is ternary: an *Andante* introduction, an *allegro vivace* main section, and an epilogue which is a varied and modified repetition of the introduction. The whole work is in F major.

The epithet "sinfonico" must be taken with the usual grain of salt. It is true that Puccini endeavoured in this work to apply certain symphonic methods, if only to show what he had learnt from the Germans. This becomes evident notably in the way in which he tries to work out thematically his various melodies. There are, for instance, short quasi-symphonic sections with interplay of motives, and attempts at new formations and contrapuntal combinations. Yet these sections look rather academic and out of place, and altogether there is little in the "Capriccio" that suggests real understanding of the symphonic style. The texture is practically homophonic and the work does not grow organically from a few thematic germs. The "Capriccio" is really a sort of "pot-pourri" overture like so many French and Italian operatic overtures, its themes being more or less loosely strung together. The standard by which a symphonic work was judged in Italy at that time could hardly have been very high, if Filippi could speak of the composer as a "temperamento specialmente sinfonista." The outstanding weakness of the "Capriccio" is its unsuccessful amalgamation of German symphonism with Italian operatic elements (Verdi had recognised that danger in good time and repeatedly warned the younger composers against it.) Puccini himself admitted in later years that he lacked the symphonic gift; and, in fact, all the orchestral intermezzos where he tried to write symphonically, such as those in "Le Villi," "Manon Lescaut" or "Butterfly," are unsatisfactory from this point of view.†

*There are two orchestral marches written in 1896, but according to Specht they are insignificant.

†See article "Puccini's Early Operas," page 48.

PUCCINI'S ONLY SYMPHONIC VENTURE 'CAPRICCIO SINFONICO'

Yet what lifts the "Capriccio Sinfonico" far above the usual standard of a gifted student composer's leaving exercise is the rich, fresh and genuine melodic invention to which I have referred already. The slow introduction contains three and the main section four different themes. Altogether seven themes which may seem disproportionate in a comparatively short work such as the "Capriccio," yet which certainly testifies to an exceptional melodic talent. Here are the beginnings of the seven themes

Andante moderato (Introduction)

Ex. 1.

Ex. 2.

Con espressione

Ex. 3.

allegro vivace (main section)

Ex. 4.

Ex. 5. *Sostenuto*

f

Ex. 6.

Ex. 7.

f dolce

Of these Nos 2 and 3 are used—in the form in which they re-appear in the epilogue—in the requiem music in “Edgar,” and No 4 in “La Bohème.” With the exception of No 1, all the other themes already bear some of Puccini’s mature “fingerprints.” I choose Nos 2 and 5 for special examination. No 2 has some of those characteristics which constitute a favourite melodic type of the mature Puccini, his so-called “tired” melody, i.e. the short-winded one-bar phrase, the tendency to sink gradually down to the lower fifth, the minor key and the slow tempo. Melodies of this type have a character of weariness which is intensified in No 2 by the limping syncopations of the accompaniment. There is something spineless and neurasthenic in them. The expression of No 2 is that of a *recitativo lamentoso*, which made it very suitable for the requiem music in “Edgar.” Similar melodies are to be found in “Manon Lescaut” (embarkation scene) and “Turandot” (the funeral march which accompanies the Persian prince on the way to the scaffold).

No 5 is rather typical of Puccini’s lyrical-sentimental cantilenas with their gently moving, dance-like lilt. Many of his arias are built upon melodies of this kind, which brings us to another important point. With the exception of Nos 1 and 4, the themes of the “Capriccio” are genuine operatic melodies, so that one feels almost tempted to put words to them. The budding operatic composer peeps out of them. It lies in the nature of such melodies that they are not really suitable for symphonic treatment—another reason for Puccini’s failure in this respect.*

From the character of the themes quoted above it is easy to gather that of the work as a whole. It is partly lyrical and sentimental, partly cheerful and capricious, with an occasional touch of sombreness. Had Puccini chosen to write a full-length overture to “La Bohème,” it would most probably have had the same character as the “Capriccio.” Its operatic nature reveals itself also in dramatic outbursts such as this —

*A Coppotelli, in his “Per la Musica Italiana” (Orvieto, 1919), maintains that the lack of symphonic skill was not only characteristic of Puccini, but of most operatic composers of his generation, and he attributes this fact to the insufficient training of the students in harmony and counterpoint. According to Coppotelli, melodic invention was esteemed to be the chief aim of the student-composer, everything else being of secondary importance. Significant of the whole attitude among Italian composers of the period towards symphonic writing was Mascagni’s words: “Only when my imagination becomes exhausted will I write symphonies.”

PUCCINI'S ONLY SYMPHONIC VENTURE 'CAPRICCIO SINFONICO'



Mention must also be made of some melodic influences from the early German romantics, such as Weber and Schumann. There are on the other hand, some phrases which occur later in Mascagni, who was one of Puccini's younger friends at the Conservatoire and who must have heard the performance of the "Capriccio" (Nor did Mascagni refrain from taking some lines for his "Cavalleria" from Puccini's early "Le Villi").

A quick glance at the harmonic idiom of the "Capriccio" shows by no means the same richness of invention that we notice in the melodic style. Puccini is inclined to cling too long to the same key, and at times lacks purpose in his modulations. Compared with that of his immediately following works his harmonic vocabulary is rather small. The chord of the diminished seventh still plays the part of maid-of-all-work, particularly in the modulations. Yet, on the other hand, some typically Puccinian traits can be found: consecutive fifths, the use of chords of the seventh instead of mere triads, and the replacement of the tonic chord by its mediant or submediant.—



The copy of the piano arrangement gives no indication of the scoring of the work. From the facsimile of the first page of the autograph score, reproduced in Specht's book it can be deduced that the "Capriccio" is rather heavily scored. For in addition to the usual brass, with three trombones, there are a cornet and an ophicleide, and the percussion comprises tympani, bass drum, cymbals and triangle.

Not one of Puccini's biographers who have had access to the autograph in Torre del Lago has taken the trouble to subject the "Capriccio" to a critical examination. Yet they are all agreed that it ought to be rescued from oblivion by publication and performance. In spite of the few weaknesses which I have attempted to show, I have come to the same conclusion. For the weaknesses are outbalanced by the good qualities. It is now for Puccini's publishers to consider that plea.

A PUCCINI OPERETTA: 'LA RONDINE.'

TO write a comic opera is a far more difficult task, everything else being equal, than the setting of a tragic subject. To make music, which in opera is primarily the language of emotions, convincingly express wit, comedy and humour, all of which address themselves to the intellect, is a rare gift among composers. Hence the comparatively small number of good comic operas. It was, therefore, no small surprise when in 1919 Puccini brought out his "Gianni Schicchi." How did it happen, most people asked, that a composer whose strongest point was supposed to have been the successful exploitation on the operatic stage of tragic love-stories of a markedly sentimental character should suddenly burst out into comic opera? This seemed all the more surprising since "Gianni Schicchi" turned out to be a masterpiece comparable to no less a work than Verdi's "Falstaff." One had not suspected in Puccini a strong gift for the comic any more than one had suspected it at the time in Verdi. Yet in Puccini's case this was perhaps much less justified. He had long before shown a happy comic vein, only that in his previous operas it was not so conspicuous since it was there well balanced and amalgamated with tragic and more lyrical elements. One need merely recall "La Bohème" and certain scenes and characters from other works.* But there the comic element was by way of a pleasant ingredient, not a dish in itself: it was to introduce some variety and contrast into the otherwise tragic action. Yet the idea of writing a full-fledged comic opera on its own had been in Puccini's mind ever since his "Manon Lescaut" (1893) or soon after. It took twenty-four years, however, before he carried it out. That is where the ill-fated "La Rondine" ("The Swallow") comes in. For it seems to have been the comic work that he had meant to write one day and which he actually wrote with his "Gianni Schicchi."

"La Rondine" was Puccini's first large-scale attempt in this direction. True, the attempt failed. The opera was

*See, for instance, the levée in the second act of "Manon Lescaut," the wedding-ceremony and the figure of Goro in "Madam Butterfly," the ensembles of the gold-diggers in the first act of "The Girl of the Golden West," and the sacristan in "La Tosca."

from the outset a bird with a broken wing whose flights after the first performance in Monte Carlo in 1917 were only short-lived. But it served, at least, one good purpose. It taught the composer a lesson which he appears to have taken to heart in "Gianni Schicchi". This was the simple truth that in comic opera the comic element—in its broadest meaning—must dominate.

"La Rondine" appears, therefore, in retrospect as an "unconscious" experiment in the comic style, the fruits of which were to show themselves in the later work. Seen in this light, it gains more importance than it would perhaps possess if considered on its own merits.

The failure of "La Rondine" was due primarily to the fact that both librettist (Adami) and composer allowed the comic element to be pushed into the background by a generally, too sentimental treatment of the story, which they even tinged with some tragic colour. Admittedly it was a difficult task to alter the original form of the libretto as first presented to Puccini by Willner and Reichert (1914). The two Viennese hacks had fabricated a book on the lines of Lehár's and Kálman's operettas—that is, operettas aspiring to opera, with great quasi-tragic scenes and with plenty of sentimental slush and false tears. In these hybrids there was little left of the original character of the classical operetta.* All Puccini was asked to do was to write eight to ten musical numbers, the rest being in spoken dialogue which was all in keeping with the well-tried recipe of such works. Surprisingly enough, Puccini at first accepted. For one thing, he had shortly before quarrelled and finally broken with Tito Ricordi and wanted to give the publisher a lesson by accepting the offer of Eibenschuetz and Berté, the Viennese publishers and directors of the famous Carltheater, to write an operetta for them. For another, this venture into an as yet unexplored field strongly appealed to him and this all the more after his not very successful excursion into the Wild West of his preceding opera ("The Girl of the Golden West"). But Puccini soon realized his mistake. A Viennese operetta was after all not his métier and Adami was charged to transmogrify the libretto into something more substantial and more suitable to Puccini's operatic sense. I do not know

*It was this tendency that proved a curse for the true form of operetta as represented in the masterpieces of Offenbach, Strauss, Suppé, Fall and Sullivan, and has brought about its present-day corruption and degeneration.

how much of the original story Adam retained in his own version, but his treatment of the plot and its characters did fall between two stools: it was neither light enough for a comic setting nor sufficiently serious for a tragic opera.

The gist of the story is that Magda, a *demi-mondaine* and the mistress of a rich Parisian banker—the action takes place in the Paris of the Second Empire—longs, rather incongruously, for true love which she finds in the person of Ruggiero, a young and poor student from the province. His wish to marry her she answers by leaving him again for the banker, since like her elder sister in “*La Traviata*” she thinks her past does not entitle her to matrimonial happiness. Parallel to this runs the love-affair of Lisetta, her chambermaid, with a poet who in the rôle of a modern Pygmalion wants to make of Lisetta a famous actress. After a disastrous failure she, too, deserts her lover to return happily to her domestic duties. With Mozart’s “*Così fan tutte*” in mind, the parallelism in the action of “*La Rondine*” could have been made the source of highly amusing situations if its chief hero and heroine and the part they play in the plot had not been drawn on rather heavy and sentimental lines. So much so that in the last act we expect a really tragic *dénouement*. Think of “*La Traviata*” or “*La Bohème*,” but without its tragic ending and with the two lovers separating on friendly terms, and you will realize why “*La Rondine*” does not come off. The story lacks a definite direction in either way, comic and tragic. There is no clinching of the matter. The same applies to its score. In the music of Magda and Ruggiero one feels Puccini wanting to burst out into great passionate and dramatic phrases but often watering them down to maudlin drawing-room sentiment. On the other hand, the scenes between the chambermaid and her poet do not possess the necessary edge and comic “bite” to provide a sufficiently effective contrast, as Puccini did with such masterly hand in the music of Musetta and Marcel. One is too often aware of the damper that the libretto put on the composer’s inspiration.

Yet it would be unjust to say that “*La Rondine*” is a wholly uninspired piece of work. Despite its fundamental weakness it is written in a fluent and technically accomplished style. It is above all in the ensembles that Puccini shows his skilful handling of light conversation and of swift and unforced turns from one situation to another, as in the hand-reading scene in the first act, or in the great ensembles in Bullier’s restaurant in the second act, which often recall

the light humour and the gay boisterousness of the Quartier-Latin scene of "La Bohème" In fact, one is right in suspecting Puccini of having tried to recapture some of the musical atmosphere of his early masterpiece And it is significant that in such passages the music of "La Rondine" shows the true Puccinian touch of melodic spontaneity, lyrical swing and passionate climax Moreover, there are some fetching tunes (particularly the one of the quartet and chorus in the second act), there are several waltzes whose melodies are woven through all the three acts, and the whole work is pleasant, agreeable, if often undistinguished, music Had it been written by some unknown composer it would probably have been acclaimed an excellent operetta "La Rondine" is, with the exception of the youthful "Edgar," the only work by Puccini that has never been produced in this country There was, however, a studio performance of a potted version given some years ago by the B B C It showed, at any rate to one listener, that its technical mastery and the quality of its music as a whole raise this "might-have-been" far above the level of the present-day operetta



THE EXOTIC ELEMENT IN PUCCINI.

ATTEMPTS to introduce elements of non-European music into musical compositions of the West reach rather far back. Early examples may be found in the so-called "janizary" pieces of Mozart and Beethoven (e.g. the "Chor der Janitscharen" in Mozart's "Entführung aus dem Serail" and the well-known *Rondo alla turca* from his Sonata in A major, and the Turkish March and Chorus of Dervishes from Beethoven's "Ruins of Athens"). Similar examples employing certain rhythmic and melodic peculiarities of Hungarian Gypsy music, may be found in works of Haydn and Schubert. All these attempts, however, were little more than products of artistic sport (*artistische Spielerei*), introduced occasionally into some work, but without significance as regards the musical taste or style of its period.

With the beginnings of romanticism, the picture changed. Both romantic literature and music, showed the influence, often very strongly, of European and exotic folklore. Romanticism discovered, to some extent, that there are people whose artistic expressions—even if different in nature and upon another level of development from those of central and western Europe—still possess so much that is novel and redolent of the soil that they command careful consideration. The direct result of this "discovery" was that nations began to figure in European musical history who had previously played no rôle in it—or, at any rate, no important one—and who now, as the sources of new national schools, began to colour the further development of European music. Among such nations were the Russians, Scandinavians, and Czechs.

This fact is important, because it was directly the romanticists' interest in folk-lore which paved the way for the admission into European art-music of genuinely exotic elements—that is, *not* European ones. At the same time another important factor was at work. This was the political and economical expansion which set in during the nineteenth century and which, supported by rapid technical advances, reduced the distances between the continents. Europe came into closer contact with cultures of which, in the past, she had known only through a few books and travellers' reports. If it was the Near East that had previously exercised a special attraction upon the minds of an older Europe—

as witness the many oriental subjects in the operas of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries ("Turkish" operas)—the circle now widened towards the East and West.

The American West and the countries of the Far East, especially China and Japan, revealed new and curious features tending to crowd out interest in the Near East. As early as 1779 a book had appeared, by a French priest and missionary, Amiot, which, under the title, "*Memoires sur la Musique des Chinois*," dealt with the music of East Asia. It is only since the end of the nineteenth century that we have gained more precise information concerning this exotic music. An important invention proved a real path-breaker. This was the Edison phonograph which, for the first time, made it possible for exotic music to be recorded and collected faithfully and authentically. Such exotic music as Europeans had previously jotted down from performances had, for the most part, suffered from the inability of the unattuned European ear to hear the music as it was. This ear could not provide for entirely correct transcriptions of the unfamiliar and often quite complicated sounds. Frequently investigators, quite unwittingly simply Europeanized the unfamiliar idioms, so that a false transcript of the music necessarily resulted. The phonograph completely eliminated this source of errors. I mention this because Puccini, before approaching the composition of "*Butterfly*" and "*Turandot*," had resorted not only to written transcriptions of Japanese and Chinese music but also to this modern medium, and had consulted a large number of phonograph recordings. Before writing "*The Girl of the Golden West*," he had had opportunity, during a visit to America, to hear various Negro spirituals and Indian songs sung in their proper haunts.

It is striking that Puccini should have seized upon exotic subjects for no less than three of his works, and should have occupied himself so intensely with the music that would add authentic local colour to the dramatic scene. The question arises: why should a European composer introduce exotic elements into his music at all—that is, elements essentially foreign to him? The answer to this question may perhaps appear to be a different one in each case; but I believe that there are three main causes for this phenomenon in European music of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, causes which, in practice, resulted in three different types.

It is characteristic of the first type that the composer, if he writes an opera or some other programmatic music, turns to exotic material merely for the sake of local colour

suggested or demanded by his subject, without his having to stand in any inner relation to exotic music at all. Thus it was with the Viennese composers mentioned at the beginning of this article, and also, to cite a few more modern examples, in Mascagni's "Iris," Strauss' "Salome," d'Albert's posthumous opera "Mr Wu," and many operas of the *Verismo* school, to which Puccini in part belonged. In them, the use of the exotic element occurs in a purely superficial manner and must be considered as nothing more than an attractive flavour.

The second type is found where the purely musical peculiarities of exotic tone-systems exert such a fascination upon a composer that he assimilates certain elements of the alien music and transforms them into part of his own personal language. Verdi, for example, realized the possibility of doing this, in his "Aida." Although this opera remained his only experiment in that direction, the oriental features are organically woven into the general language of the whole work, they are not merely grafted upon it. We find such assimilation of exotic elements practised on a grand scale in French impressionism, which, without the influence of those elements, would never have attained its outstanding significance in the history of European music. This is not just coincidence, but due to a deep-seated psychological relation between primitive music and exoticism on the one hand and impressionism on the other. Puccini's exotic style belongs for the most part to the second type.

The third type is represented by music in which exoticism is consciously introduced as a stimulus in the creation of a new musical style, in other words, the foreign musical idiom serves, so to speak, as a leaven which, acting on an older musical style, is capable of producing a new one.* This method was followed for a long time in American music, which, in the effort to free itself from European influence, turned first to Indian and later to that of the Negro.

In reality, these three types are found but seldom separate, in general all three of them appear united in the stylistic leanings of one composer or of a whole school, with one or the other type more strongly pronounced. Even though it takes but a subordinate part in Puccini's total work, his inclination to clever artifice, on the one hand and his endeavour, on the other, to give a new impetus to his inspiration, with the aid of exoticism are clearly in evidence. But what drove

* Cf. Georg Capellen, "Ein neuer exotischer Musikstil," Stuttgart, 1906.

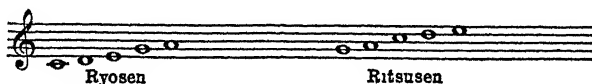
him most forcefully towards exotic material was its strange world of unfamiliar sounds, which exercised an irresistible charm upon his keen, over-refined senses. This sense, which found clear expression in his harmonic and orchestral technique, discovered, in this unfamiliar music, traits and tendencies that attracted him magnetically and with which he felt some close, inner relation. Comparatively early, shortly after "*Manon Lescaut*," he had already conceived the plan of writing an opera, "*Buddha*," in which Indian melodies were to be used. Nothing came of it. Yet, later, he returned three times to exotic material, and—what is psychologically important—each time at a different phase of his artistic development. In three works there is revealed an urge which, in him, amounted practically to an obsession, and from which his whole life long he never entirely escaped.

Much was written about Puccini in his day. And much reference was made to his exotic tendencies. But, to my knowledge, no serious attempt has ever been made to spot these tendencies accurately or to show how the exotic element was used by him, how it influenced the body of his music, and how it manifested itself in his technique of composition. It is interesting, from the psychological viewpoint, that Puccini should have seized upon exotic material at all. But from the standpoint of critical analysis the main problem is how he used it. For it is precisely in the "*how*" that the specific individuality of Puccini's style lies hidden.*

MELODY

To arrive at a correct understanding of what follows, it is necessary to mention briefly the exotic tone-systems that come into play in Puccini. East Asiatic music, as a whole, is based on a five-note scale without semitones—the so-called pentatonic system, with the two chief scales.

Ex. 1



* In order to present a clear picture of Puccini's exoticism I thought it advisable to deal with its various aspects, *i.e.*, melody, harmony, rhythm and orchestration, separately. But it must be borne in mind that it is only in the combination and concerted action, as it were, of these various elements that Puccini's exotic style reveals itself in its full import. To facilitate study, most of the musical illustrations are drawn from the vocal score. Where illustrations are not actually printed I have indicated the place of the particular passage in the score, thus "*Madame Butterfly*," Act II, 76.

A new scale may be built on each of these five different tones, so that, in contrast to the European major-minor system, we have here five different octave-species. Alongside these, there exist also seven-note or heptatonic scales that have semitones and seem to be identical with certain church-modes

Ex. 2

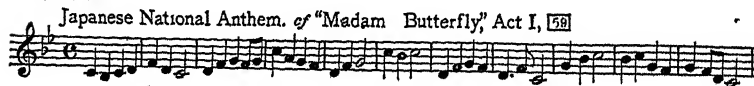


(This explains why, in Puccini, certain modal and pentatonic phrases are often encountered together.) The pentatonic, however, is much more commonly used than the heptatonic. This tone-system is not peculiar to East Asia, it is also found in music of many primitive people of Africa and the Americas, and also in the oldest European melodies. The song of the minstrel and the Indian lullaby in the "Girl of the Golden West" display the pentatonic character very clearly.

As a rule exotic melodies do not have a tonal centre. They can begin or end in any degree of the pentatonic scale. The absence of a leading-tone makes all the degrees equal. To our western ear, these melodies possess no centre of gravity. They strike us, to some extent, as being in a state of perpetually unstable equilibrium. (See Examples 4, 8, 9, 10, and 13.) Hence the interesting task of giving these unstable melodies a tonal relationship, that is, of interpreting them harmonically, so that they can be adapted to the chord-system of Western music. More will be said about that in connection with our discussion of harmony.

Puccini may be said to employ two methods in the melodic use of exotic tone-material. The first consists in his taking over the original melody in literal or almost literal form. I have succeeded, in seven instances, in identifying such original melodies. Four are used in "Butterfly" and three in "Turandot." They are quoted in Examples 3-9, with a statement of their origin and with reference to their first appearance in the operas in which they are used.

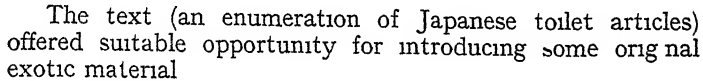
Ex. 3*



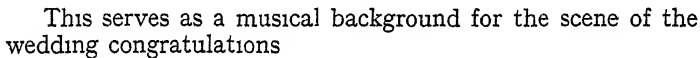
*Examples 3, 4, 6, 10, and 11 are from Isawa Shuji, "Sammlung von japanischen Volksliedern," piano arrangements by Georg Capellen, Leipzig, Breitkopf & Härtel 1904.

Here the appearance of official Japanese functionaries (commissioners of administration and civil servants) may have suggested the use of the national anthem

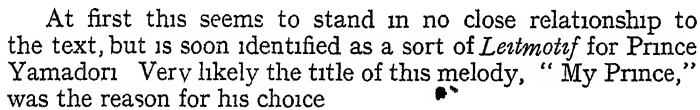
Cherry-blossom Song of "Madam Butterfly," Act I, 4 measures after. [75].



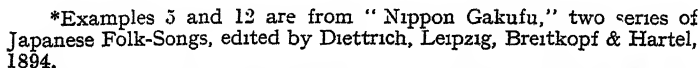
Japanese Song, "The Ninon-Bashi." of "Madam Butterfly,"
Acts I, [87] and II [18]



Japanese Song, "My Prince" of "Madam Butterfly," Act II, 5 measures after [20], 4 measures before [22], [26], [28], [39], 6 measures after [85]



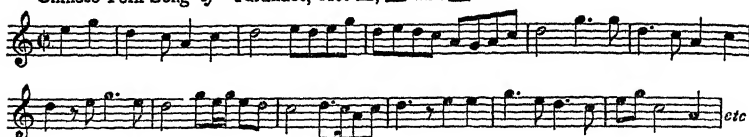
Chinese Folk-Song, "O Mother! you understand me well" of "Turandot," Act II, 1



71

Ex. 8

Chinese Folk-Song of "Turandot," Act III, [10] and [13]



These two examples are used in a very abbreviated form to characterize the three Chinese court-officials, Ping, Pang, and Pong.

Ex. 9

Chinese Temple Music ("Guiding March") of "Turandot," Act II, 5 measures before [20] and 2 measures after [67]



The court ceremony provides an occasion for the use of this melody

The second method—and one far more interesting from the viewpoint of the technique of composition—consists in Puccini's freely varying certain exotic melodies, or in his using them as models in the invention of similarly constructed melodies, or in his lifting characteristic motives out of them in order to mould therefrom new melodies. In examples 10-17 a number of exotic melodies are quoted which, in combination with the passage in which Puccini used them, offer a favourable opportunity for the study of these various possibilities. The motives that play an important rôle are marked

Ex. 10

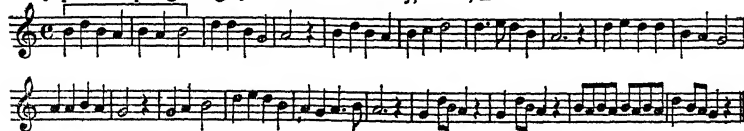
Japanese Military-Drill Song, of "Madam Butterfly," Act I, 5 measures after [18]



THE EXOTIC ELEMENT IN PUCCINI

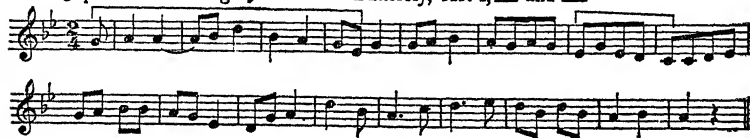
Ex. 11

Japanese Spring Song of "Madam Butterfly," Act I, [41].



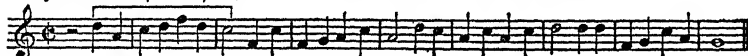
Ex. 12

Japanese Folk Song of "Madam Butterfly," Act I, [37] and [44]



Ex. 13

Beginning of the "Song in Honor of the Emperor" (Chinese Imperial Hymn).
of "Turandot," Act I, [19].



Ex. 14

Chinese Song, "Madame Wang" of "Turandot," Act II, 8 measures before [23]



Ex. 15⁵

Indian Medicine-Song. of "Girl of the Golden West," Act II, 3 measures after [3].



Ex. 16⁶ and 17

Negro Folk-Songs of "Girl of the Golden West," Act I, [20] and [28].



⁵ From Natalie Curtis, *The Indian's Book*. New York Harper & Brothers, 1917

⁶ Examples 16 and 17 are quoted from Dorothy Scarborough, *On the Trail of Negro Folk Songs*, Cambridge (U S A), 1925, though they must have reached Puccini, who died in 1924, through some other channel.

The Boys' Chorus in "Turandot," Act I, [19], furnishes a very instructive example of the masterly technique with which Puccini created an organic whole out of such little motives and fragments of motives. The piece, extending over 37 measures, is a composite of several exotic motives, of which the most important are derived from Examples 13 (which later returns often, by itself) and a very old Confucian hymn. Although here various motives become joined with one another in a kaleidoscopic way, the whole passage—through the manner in which the heterogeneous themes are brought into combination with one another—nevertheless creates the impression of a logically developed idea. This piece is at the same time an object lesson in Puccini's characteristic method of assimilating foreign elements into his own musical idiom. The technique is to be found applied almost wherever closed melodic forms appear, especially in the aria. One should examine from this viewpoint Cho-Cho-San's A minor aria in Act II of "Butterfly," or the big aria for the heroine in Act II of "Turandot," or Liu's arias in G-flat major and D major in Acts I and III respectively of the same work. In each of these examples, various pentatonic motives are so welded together that an organic melody grows out of them.

Here are a few more striking motives from Puccini, all clearly pentatonic

Ex. 18



Similar pentatonic passages may be discovered on almost every page of the scores of "Butterfly" and "Turandot"

In addition to the pentatonic system mentioned above, there are found, in the music of East Asia and other regions, curious scales with semitones, *e g.*

Ex. 19



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What immediately strikes one here is the preference for the augmented fourth or tritone. The *diabolus in musica* of the old theorists plays a very important rôle in exotic music. Its frequent appearance is attributable to the sharp dissonance that endows this interval with a distinctive quality. It is the remarkable sensitiveness to sound possessed by the primitive and semi-primitive peoples that may, at bottom, be the cause for its frequent appearance. It occurs in impressionistic music also, perhaps, for similar reasons. And, incidentally, in the twelve-note music of the Schoenberg school, the interval acquires a significance both melodic and constructive, in that it divides the chromatic scale into two equal sections, and thus becomes the axis of the atonal system. Puccini, however, uses it in the manner in which exotic music uses it—as a characteristic interval.

Ex. 20



(cf also the "Forths of the Prophet" in "Salome")

In the short "Dance of Seduction" in G minor, in Act III of "Turandot," there merges suddenly, and in a striking fashion, the interval of the augmented second, which is really characteristic of the music of the Near East.

Ex. 21



Hence, the whole passage, for which the "Dance of the Seven Veils" in Strauss's "Salome" probably served as a model, does not fit stylistically into the pentatonic scheme of the rest of "Turandot."

HARMONY

So far we have been tracing the most important manifestations of exotic influence in the formation of Puccini's melodies. The picture becomes more complicated, however, when we turn to his harmony. Here exotic and impressionistic elements are so closely knit together that a clear separation of one from the other is often impossible. It should be borne in mind, however, that much in impressionistic music approaches very close to exotic music anyway, and that several features of the former must be designated as, on the whole, exotic—points to which reference has already been made. But it is nevertheless possible, without resorting to guesswork, to hit upon a number of characteristics that definitely point to the influence of exotic music in Puccini's harmony.

In this connection two methods may be distinguished. The first consists in investing the harmony itself with exotic traits; that is, in imitating and reproducing certain peculiar features of exotic music, so far as that music shows any germ of chordal structure. Or else—and this is Puccini's second method—an exotic melody is set harmonically (in our sense of the word) and is "tucked" into the western choral system. In applying this method Puccini brings into full play his superior skill as an ingenious harmonist.


The strikingly frequent use of the pedal-point is among the most prominent features of the first method. We find it to be almost a rule with Puccini that he supplies an exotic melody in the top-voice with a pedal-point in the bass. This is a imitation of exotic "pedal-point music".* The exotic pedal-points possess no harmonic functional significance. Nor do they produce upon the hearer the tension that results from the pedal-point in classic music. (The prerequisite for that tension is our western harmonic sense.) They serve solely to increase the tonal volume and to bestow a special charm upon the music, precisely because of the absence of any harmonic relationship. It is purely the sensuous element that we encounter here. (It is for the sake of that element that most pedal-points also appear in our modern music.) Puccini produces very beautiful examples in

*"In Japan, the first two strings, *d'* - *g*, retain their relative and absolute pitch in all tunings of the *koto*, even when these tones do not belong to the pentatonic scale in use." Otto Abraham, "Studien über das Tonsystem und die Musik der Japaner," in "Sammelbande der Internationalen Musikgesellschaft IV" (1904), 2

Another device that is typical in Puccini and resembles the effect of the pedal-point very closely is the persisting repetition of a chord-progression pattern, most often tonic-dominant. Regardless of the melodic line, such a pattern, unaffected by the melody of the upper voice, is clung to tenaciously, and thus produces the monotony that we so often experience in listening to exotic music. The device is clearly seen in "Butterfly," Act I, 3 measures after [61], in the form of an *ostinato* (extending over 14 measures

A musical staff in bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notes are G (first space), A (second space), and B (third space), which correspond to the letters G, I, and V written below the staff.

and later on at [63], with

 D-flat I V

This primitive chord-scheme may be expanded, as is shown by the next example from "Turandot," Act I, [19]

E-flat I VIII I V *etc.*

A remarkably beautiful example of this curious monotony, resulting from the use of the persisting type of chordal progression, is found in Suzuki's Prayer at the beginning of Act II of "Butterfly," with its 18 measures of solemn ceremonial chords.

D-Minor I V

A similar example occurs in the Indian Lullaby at the beginning of Act II of "The Girl," where we have the following chord-progression

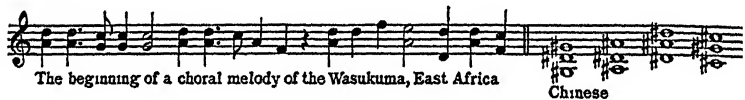
Ex. 26



Augmented triad in the second inversion, with an embellishing chord. Note the tritone in the bass.

The parallel fifths in the "Turandot" example bring us to another characteristic of exotic music—parallel chord-progressions. Wherever exotic or primitive music shows the beginning of a chordal style, parallel intervals may be plainly observed, chiefly in fourths, fifths, and octaves.

Ex. 27



We should note that the same phenomenon is found in certain early stages of our polyphonic music—that is, in organum and fauxbourdon—, then vanished, to reappear once more in French Impressionism, a peak in the development of European harmony. The recurring appearances cannot be accidents. On the contrary, they must be the result of closely related psychological associations, for which a satisfactory explanation has not yet been given.

Akin to French impressionism as his art was, Puccini naturally adopted these devices rather early. One need but recall, for example, the typical parallel fifths at the beginning of Act III of "La Bohème," or the succession of parallel triads in the "Scarpia"-motive in "Tosca." (See, for example, its appearance at the beginning of Act I and, in more extended form, 10 measures after [48] in the same act.) But the astonishing frequency of parallel chords (built on seconds, fourths, fifths, sixths, sevenths) in "Butterfly," and especially in "Turandot," is evidence that Puccini, in using them, was quite consciously imitating, after his own fashion, features

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of exotic music. One may see parallel mixtures of this sort in the example from "Turandot" quoted on p 66, *infra*: parallel fourths in the flutes and celesta, combined with a pattern of sixths and fourths* in the clarinets. And one may compare this example with the African chordal melody quoted above. In all essentials, the principle applied in the piece of primitive music is the same as that encountered in the example from the mature style of this twentieth-century European composer. Here are a few typical illustrations of the same sort of parallel chord-progressions:

Ex. 28

1. "Madam Butterfly," Act I, [44] (fifths)



2. "Turandot," Act I, [37] (fifths)

3. "Turandot," Act I, [10] (§ chords)



4. "Turandot," Beginning of Act II
(parallel triads, bitonal)

5. *Ibid*, 2 measures after [44]
(parallel sevenths)



6. "Turandot," Act I, [44] (fifths and octaves)



We now come to the second method, namely—Puccini's way of setting exotic melodies harmonically (in our sense), or, to put it differently, the way in which he "tucks" the alien melodies into our chordal system. At this point, let it be said that we encounter, in Puccini's application of this method, the same harmonies, on the whole, as are characteristic of his non-exotic operas. The whole harmonic vocabulary is applied, from the simple triads to the most complex chromatically altered chords and chords "spiced" with unessential notes. Often this range of different harmonic

*All tritones, save one.

possibilities is displayed in the setting of one and the same melody. An excellent example of this is offered by the treatment of the "Yamadori" melody (see Ex. 6 on p. 71) in Act II of "Butterfly." I give below the opening measures of this melody in its six different harmonic versions.

Ex. 29

"Madam Butterfly," Act II, 5 measures after [20] *Ibid* 4 measures before [22]

Ibid [20] *Ibid* [28]

Ibid [39] *Ibid* 6 measures after [35] etc

Puccini's resourcefulness in discovering the different harmonic possibilities of one melody is here clearly displayed. A similar example is afforded by the minstrel's song in Act I of "The Girl." It is interesting to compare the simple triad harmonization at [20] with the many passing-note figures, 3 measures after [26] and with the contrapuntal counter melody, 5 measures after [28].

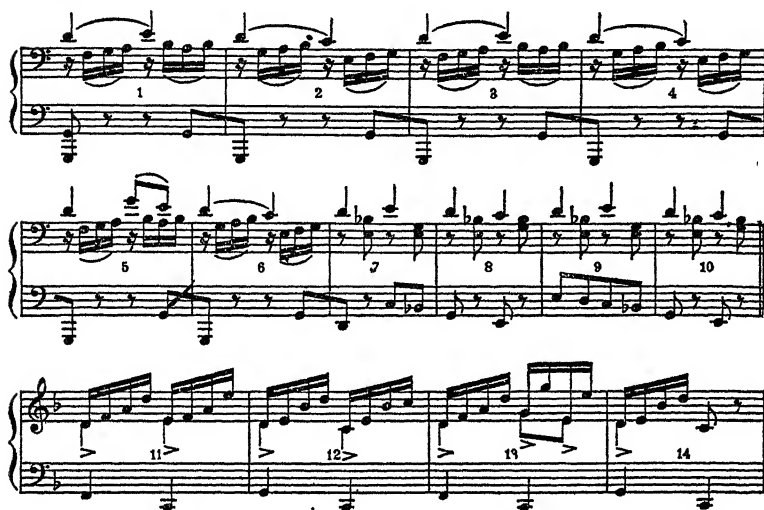
Ex. 30

Cellos, Bassoon and Clarinet

The combination of both methods—*i.e.* imitation of exotic "harmony" and harmonic setting (in our sense)—is shown in the following passage from "Butterfly," Act I, [88]

THE EXOTIC ELEMENT IN PUCCINI

Ex. 31



The melody (devoid of half-tones) appears here in three different types of harmonization: measures 1-6 employ the pedal-point technique, with which we are already acquainted; in measures 7-10, the notes of the theme are all treated as parts of the dominant ninth of F major; in measures 11-14, we have the tonic-dominant progression in the bass used as a recurring pattern.

We spoke, in connection with parallel chords, of tendencies towards a sort of part-music in exotic art, so far as certain vertical combinations were concerned. There exists besides, a part-music of a more linear nature—the so-called heterophony*.

The principle of heterophony consists in a melody being employed simultaneously in several voices, but in such a way that the melodic line of the leading voice—which has the “theme”—is not doubled in other voices—which play round the fundamental line freely and vary it, without, however, wandering so far from it that one may say they acquire melodic independence. We think to hear different parts, but what we really hear is always the same melody being incessantly varied in the other parts.

*Cf. Guido Adler, “Heterophonie,” in “Peters Jahrbuch,” 1908, and Robert Lach, “Natur und orientalische Kulturvolker” (contribution to Adler’s “Handbuch der Musikgeschichte,” Vol. I).

Ex. 32



This example from a Javanese "score" displays the principle of heterophonic music very clearly. The melody lies in the lowest voice, and, although both the other voices seem to have melodies of their own, they in fact merely play upon the pentachord, *d-f-g-a-c*, which is the basis of the leading melody. This curious species of primitive part-music did not escape Puccini's sensitive ear any more than did the other kinds. When he heard it on records and imitated it in his "Turandot," he was by no means aware that he had hit upon one of the most interesting and complex devices in exotic music. There are only a few passages in his work that bear heterophonic traits, but these are enough to prove the fine artistic instinct of a musician who had, by listening, penetrated the last secrets of exotic music. Proof of this is offered by the following passage from "Turandot, Act III, [9].

Ex. 33

Picc. & Fl.

Viol. & Harp

Ob. & Clar

Trumpet

The lowest voice (in the trumpet) consists of a melody (devoid of semitones) which moves on the tetrachord *d-e-g-a*. Against this, the oboes and clarinets sound the same notes of the

*Quoted from Carl Stumpf, in "Sammelbände für vergleichende Musikwissenschaft," I

tetrachord, grouped vertically. The same notes, in semi-quavers, in sixteenth notes, are given to the violins and harp. The highest part combines, in the piccolo and flute, the *e* and *a*, in the form of a harmonic fifth interchangeable with a fourth—that is, the notes which, from the standpoint of rhythm, occupy most prominent positions in the main melody. This is a clear example of heterophony. A principal melody (trumpet) is accompanied partly by chords (woodwinds), partly by melodic parts (violins and harp), formed by grouping together or by dissolving the components of the principal melody. If we compare this with the Javanese illustration given above, the identity of the heterophonic principle employed in both examples will become evident at once, in spite of the fact that, in them, we are confronted by two heterogeneous musical styles. In comparison, the "Turandot" example will appear more primitive than its Javanese counterpart, in that it does not show an extended play upon the main melody, but employs a vertical type of "accompaniment." As against this, however, rhythmic contrast is much stronger in the Puccini extract than in the exotic example. The brief passage that follows it, from [10] to about [12], rests upon the same principle. The main melody (in the horns) is based on the pentachord, *a-c-d-e-g*,

Ex. 34




and this pentachord likewise lies at the basis of the other parts (*i.e.*, the flutes, xylophone, celesta, and violins). (See Ex 8 on p 72)



The musical device just discussed originates in very primitive and rudimentary attempts at either a vertical or horizontal polyphony. That it should, in Puccini, attain apparent complexity is due to the fact that it is wedded to a highly developed harmonic style and therefore must undergo certain modifications before it can serve, in our music as an adequate means of artistic expression. The special kind of modification to which Puccini subjects it, forms the most interesting contribution to his use of exotic material.

RHYTHM


Here also certain exotic influences make themselves felt, though not to the same extent as in Puccini's melody and harmony. A device that strikes one particularly in his music is the persisting repetition of a fixed, unchanging rhythmic pattern, retained throughout many measures. If this is used in a slow tempo, there sets in, willy-nilly, the feeling of monotony that we experience in listening to certain temple and funeral chants. Puccini often deepens this effect by retaining a single harmonic sequence, as we have seen in our discussion of the primitive tonic-dominant progression (*cf* pp 77-78). Typical examples of such unvaried persistent rhythms occur, in "Butterfly," in the Prayer mentioned

above (p 77), with the rhythm  and in the big

A-flat minor aria of the second act, with the syncopated

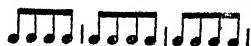
figure  or  persisting almost throughout

Such examples occur also in Johnson's short G minor passage in Act III, [23], in "The Girl," with its unrelenting minims, at the beginning of Act I of "Turandot," with its unchanging

quavers  and with particular effect in the almost

terrifying insistence of the quaver rhythm in the big aria for

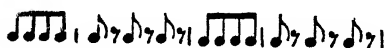
Turandot, in Act II :



The passages quoted are all examples in slow tempo. If the rhythmic *ostinato* is employed in rapid tempo, there results, instead of the monotony mentioned above, an impression of fanaticism and wildness—which can often work up to frenzy, as may be observed in many war and ceremonial songs of primitive peoples. A striking example of this sort may be found in the choruses in Act I of "Turandot," where Puccini, through the use of this technical device, gives masterful expression to the agitation, bordering upon madness, of a blood-thirsty, intoxicated crowd. (Related instances of "barbaric" rhythm may be found in certain choral scenes of Moussorgsky's "Boris Godunow," and in some works of Stravinsky's.) To this category belong also the Gold-diggers' Choruses in Acts I and III of "The Girl," though

they are not as stark and elemental as the choral passages in "Turandot." A very lovely example, showing how a persisting rhythmic figure may serve also for the expression of naive joy and innocent excitement, is offered by the chorus of friends and relatives in Act I of "Butterfly," with the characteristic dotted rhythm :

Frequent changes of rhythm and the use of irregular metres (such as go to make up measures of $\frac{5}{8}$, $\frac{7}{8}$, or $\frac{5}{4}$) may likewise be referred back to certain individual features in the rhythm of exotic music. "Turandot" offers typical examples. In the opening scene of the three masks, in Act II, the rhythm continually fluctuates between $\frac{2}{4}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$, with the persisting pattern.



so that the passage takes on a grotesque marionette-like character. Rhythms of unequal metres may be found in the following pentatonic passage in Act I, [37]

Ex. 35



and in the Imperial Hymn, for chorus, in Act II, shortly after [39]. The latter contains also the prolongations, pauses, and rests, that are typical of exotic music and clearly illustrate its rhythmically amorphous character

Ex. 36



The polyrhythms of exotic percussion-music may also be found very abundantly in the score of "Turandot" (In this respect, Stravinsky, especially the Stravinsky of "L'Histoire du Soldat," may have been an additional influence upon Puccini.) The following two examples show, in striking fashion, the close relation between exotic and modern European polyrhythms

Ex. 37

"Turandot," Act I, [35]

Oboe

Kettle-drum

Tambourine

Tam-Tam

Ex. 38

From a piece of Indian music

Drums

In each of these illustrations, the percussion instruments punctuate the main melody in one or more cross rhythms.

The important rôle played in this connection by the percussion instruments makes it necessary for us to refer to certain features in Puccini's handling of the orchestra

INSTRUMENTATION

Here the influence of exotic music is shown, in a purely external fashion, by the choice of certain orchestral instruments. The predominance of percussive or noise instruments as well as bells in all exotic and primitive music is clearly reflected in some of Puccini's scores. A mere glance is enough to convince one. His array of exotic instruments includes the Japanese tam-tam, Chinese gong, a great number of large and small bells, different kinds of drums, the tambourine, xylophone, and bass-xylophone. In "Turandot," the brass (in the stage-music) and the saxophone (*eg*, in the Chorus of Boys behind the scenes, in Act I) are most essential in heightening the impression of "instrumental exoticism." The different orchestral effects Puccini achieved through delicate mixtures of *timbres* and through the unusual combination of various instrumental groups, are a study in themselves. I cannot give here a systematic description of this highly interesting field of modern orchestral technique, but a few typical illustrations may serve as an indication of the manner in which Puccini's most refined sensibility

THE EXOTIC ELEMENT IN PUCCINI

to sound and his masterful control over the modern orchestral apparatus combine to transform the colour-wealth of exotic music into a wholly personal and original style. The pentatonic melody in "Butterfly," Act I [41], provides a good example of the combination—very frequently encountered in his work—of high wood-wind with harp and bells.

Ex. 39

Ex. 39 is a musical score for three instruments: Picc. & Fl., Harp, and Small Bells. The Picc. & Fl. part is written in a treble clef with a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and a 6/8 time signature. It features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The Harp part is also in a treble clef with the same key signature and time signature, playing a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes, marked with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The Small Bells part is in a treble clef with the same key signature and time signature, playing a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes, marked with a piano (*pp*) dynamic. The score is divided into two measures, with the second measure ending with an *etc.* marking.

The charm of this passage lies chiefly in the delicacy and unfamiliar colour quality of its instrumentation. By way of contrast, the following passage from "Turandot," Act III, shortly after [11], produces an almost grotesque effect.

Ex. 40

Ex. 40 is a musical score for five instruments: Picc. (actual pitch), Trumpet (con sord), Triangle, Celesta, and Viol. The Picc. part is in a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (F) and a 4/4 time signature, playing a melodic line with eighth notes, marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The Trumpet part is in a treble clef with the same key signature and time signature, playing a melodic line with eighth notes, marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The Triangle part is in a treble clef with the same key signature and time signature, playing a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes, marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The Celesta part is in a treble clef with the same key signature and time signature, playing a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes, marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The Viol part is in a bass clef with the same key signature and time signature, playing a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes, marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The score is divided into two measures, with the second measure ending with an *etc.* marking.

Observe the most unusual doubling of the trumpet melody in the piccolo (at a distance of two octaves!), rhythmically underlined by the triangle. The stridency of this unusual combination is somewhat tempered by the *tremolo* of the

violins and the bell-like pentachord of the celesta. The passages for the three comic figures, Ping, Pang and Pong, in particular afford good examples of Puccini's resourcefulness in producing interesting exotic sound-effects. There are, among them, passages which, in their instrumentation, bear an extraordinary resemblance to exotic "scores," passages such as the following extract from "Turandot," Act II, [9]

Ex. 41

Flutes

Clar.

Bassoon

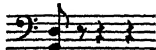
Celesta

Harp

pp

(armonici)

Certain special orchestral effects that one may light upon here and there remain to be mentioned. Among them are the use of the harp to imitate a banjo in the Gold-digger's song in "The Girl," and, in the same opera, Act I, 1 measure

after [38], the drone-bass  on the kettle-

drums, fifths that serve to mark the Bolero rhythm of the "Alla Spagnuola." To this category of special and unusual effects belong also imitations of exotic mannerisms in singing, such as humming, *glissando*, and *fals-tto* and nasal sounds, which occur in the choruses in "Butterfly" and "The Girl of the Golden West."

* * *

We have arrived at the end of our discussion. It has led us from simple manifestations, such as the use of original exotic melodies—which are here, for the first time quoted

in connection with Puccini's use of them—over the pentatonic scale in the construction of melodies to harmonic problems, such as the appearance of pedal-points, persisting chord-progression patterns, parallel combinations, and the complex phenomenon of heterophony. In our further course, we came to persisting rhythms and the polyrhythms of certain percussion passages, which already touched in part upon the domain of "instrumental exoticism." In this domain, we were able to establish, besides the use of exotic instruments, quite novel effects and mixtures of instrumental colour that could be referred back to exotic influence.

The guiding thought of this study was to afford, through a systematic presentation of the exotic influence upon Puccini, a clear perspective of the bewildering abundance of these individual phenomena. And further, to furnish proof, based on analysis, that Puccini's use of exotic material did not spring from a fashion of his period—as did that of his antipode, Strauss, or that of some of his other contemporaries—but from an inner, irresistible urge to cope with the exotic problem in music. Hence, I believe we are justified in speaking of an exotic element in Puccini's music.



THE 'AUSTRIANISM' OF ANTON BRUCKNER.

IS Bruckner a great composer or is he only a minor light of more or less local significance whose importance has been much exaggerated? To put this question to German and Austrian musicians would be blasphemy. For them Bruckner's greatness has become an article of faith. This was, of course, not always so. There were times when even in his own land Bruckner's music aroused violent controversy and antagonism, with Brahms and Hanslick at the spearhead of a hostile phalanx. But this phase is now past history. In Germanic countries Bruckner is now almost as firmly established as any of the classical masters. But the tale is different in other countries. There Bruckner is either a star of unknown magnitude or else, if one or the other of his symphonies does get an occasional performance, he is summarily dismissed as a crashing bore.

Take, for instance, this country. Bruckner in England shares the fate of Sibelius in Germany and Brahms in France. One explanation for this curious aversion may lie in the fact that there must be something in the attitude and aesthetic aspect of their music that strikes a completely alien note to the particular temperament and general artistic outlook of these nations. This "something" acts as a strong barrier and is *ipso facto* responsible for the fact that certain points of intrinsic importance in the music of these composers are either misunderstood or completely missed.

Now, what is this "something" in Bruckner's case? It is not easy to define it in a word or two. It is a complex of features which for lack of a better term I would describe as pronounced "Austrianism." The two chief traits of this Austrianism as they manifest themselves in Bruckner's mental make-up are a peasant's mind and a devout, nay servile, attitude towards Catholicism and the Church. The first is accounted for by Bruckner's origin—he came of peasant stock—the second was the result of a very deep-rooted religious feeling which at times took the form of an obsession and reached a point of mystical ecstasy. His whole music was conditioned by these two factors. Hence its abrupt squareness, its rustic robustness and its primitive and almost

brutally elemental force, and hence its all-pervading religious feeling, its ecclesiastical pomp and its ecstatic outbursts. It is music that yields its secrets only if one knows the soil from which it sprung. Upper Austria, a country of peasants and priests with an atmosphere entirely its own.

Yet to say that the music of a certain composer can be fully appreciated only in conjunction with its material and spiritual background and not solely on its purely musical terms, at once argues a measure of limitations and weaknesses in this music. This is particularly true of such "absolute" music as the Bruckner symphonies.

Closely linked up with this is another characteristic. This is the sameness of the idea that inspired almost the whole of Bruckner's output. With the exception of the scherzo movements, his symphonies—not to speak of his masses—are all monumental variations on one and the same theme. God and the Christian Faith. This was the be-all and end-all of his music. To give expression to anything else, he considered unworthy of his art. And it is curious how this "ideological" sameness has its technical counterpart in the almost stereotyped and identical formal treatment of the symphonies, down to their smallest constituent parts.

But let us now turn to his credit side. Granted the sameness of his inspirational idea, yet the way in which Bruckner expresses it in his music is truly unique for its beauty, force and grandeur of conception. This conception demanded a symphonic treatment on an extraordinarily broad scale. Brahms' often-cited description of the Bruckner symphonies as "boa-constrictors" is fatuous. His own symphonic style was at bottom that of magnified chamber music and he therefore had no ear for music as diametrically opposite in spirit and technique as Bruckner's. Like another great Austrian musician, Schubert, Bruckner was inexhaustible in his melodic wealth. He poured it lavishly into his symphonies and masses. Moreover, he was the only one among the symphonists of the post-Beethovenian era who had the power of writing sustained slow movements which in their breadth of conception and wide melodic sweep reach the heights of a great Beethoven *adagio*. Bruckner's extraordinary contrapuntal skill which he schooled and developed during those long years as organist at St. Florian and Linz stood him in good stead when he began to fashion his own symphonic technique. And this brings us to another significant point of his symphonies: the organic expansion of the classical

form not only by the use of three distinct theme-groups, but also by the introduction into the same movement of several big climaxes, with the last climax—usually to be found in the codas—as the most powerful of all. The same great sustaining power that is evident in his lyrical writing is here turned to a dramatic effect of overwhelming force. If we look for a classical model it will be found in Beethoven's Choral Symphony. It is unquestionably from there that Bruckner set out on his own path.

There was also another influence at work on him. This was Wagner, whose harmonic and instrumental language had some effect on the shaping of Bruckner's symphonic style but never as much as has often been alleged. This has been proved by the recent publication of some of the original scores of the Bruckner symphonies which show that the orchestral alterations made by the Schalk brothers and Ferdinand Lowe on rather Wagnerian lines tended only to distort the true character of Bruckner's orchestral writing. And the same applies to Bruckner's formal design which is far more logical and balanced than it appears to be in the current versions, with their considerable number of disfiguring cuts. The composer, persuaded by his disciples that certain alterations would help his symphonies to wider and swifter recognition, meekly agreed to these excisions. It was the only concession that he made to the taste of musical Vienna. Otherwise this city in which he spent well over thirty years had not the slightest effect on him as either an artist or a man. He remained what he was when he first arrived there. an awkward peasant with all the humble and shy manners of a little man who felt ill at ease in this big place, a crank with the naivety of a child, but burning with the holy fire of religion, a constant seeker after God, for whom the only mission in life was to compose music *ad maiorem Dei gloriam*.



BRUCKNER'S ORGAN RECITALS IN FRANCE AND ENGLAND.

IT is curious that France and England—countries in which Bruckner's music has so far failed to gain a footing or any but a small circle of admirers—are the only two countries outside Austria in which Bruckner appeared publicly as an organist. These two concert-giving expeditions of his—the first to Nancy and Paris in the spring of 1869, the second to London in the summer of 1871—belong to a period of Bruckner's artistic development when he was still young as a symphonist. He was over forty when he wrote his first Symphony—an extraordinary case of delayed maturity. It is true that beside this first symphony he had produced by 1869 a number of church compositions, including the magnificent Mass in E minor that looks back in spirit and technique to Palestrina. But Bruckner as a composer was still practically a blank page to most of his contemporaries, with the exception of a small circle in Upper Austria, his native country.

With Bruckner as an organist it was a different matter. From early childhood the organ had been his favourite instrument. At twenty-one his free contrapuntal treatment of a Haydn theme and his improvisation of a fugue had attracted considerable attention at his examination for a school post. But what developed Bruckner into Austria's greatest organist was the period of eleven years (1845-56) as assistant schoolmaster at the seminary of St. Florian, near Linz. The baroque splendour of this Augustinian abbey was matched by its monumental organ, at that time the second largest in Austria. (The largest was that in St. Stefan's, Vienna.) It was here that Bruckner got the organ and its style into his very bones. The stylistic roots of both the Choral themes in his symphonies and the "registration" effect of his orchestral scoring are evidently to be found in his intensive study of the organ during this period.

During these years at St. Florian's he made himself a complete master of the technique of organ-playing. In 1856 his brilliant success in a competition won him the post of organist at Linz Cathedral, a post which he gave up only after twelve long years, to go to Vienna as professor of theory and organ-playing at the Conservatorium der Musikfreunde (1868). Which brings us to the period of his journey to France.

This brief sketch of Bruckner's career as an organist shows at any rate that by the time he was invited to Vienna he must have enjoyed a very high reputation as an organ-player. Yet Vienna was (and is still) no easy ground for a newcomer, particularly for one from the provinces, no matter how good his reputation. It was necessary for Bruckner to establish his new position on a sound basis and he set about this in the field in which success seemed most certain, namely, as organist. A favourable opportunity soon occurred.

The organ of the newly built church of St. Epvre in Nancy, which counted among its patrons the Emperor and Empress of Austria, was to be opened with a composition. On the advice of Hanslick, pope of Viennese music, all-powerful critic of the *Neue Freie Presse*, and at that time Bruckner's friend (though in later years he became his bitterest enemy), Bruckner decided to compete. His two recitals, on April 28th and 29th, had such a resounding success that one French newspaper hailed him as "un homme de goût le plus élevé, de la science la plus vaste et la plus féconde." Bruckner, highly surprised and delighted by this result, wrote in his characteristic naive, good, childlike way to Herbeck, the director of the Vienna Conservatorium: "I have only the oral judgments of the professionals in my favour*—a point on which modesty bids me be silent—and also the applause of the public. Charming young ladies of the highest aristocracy even came to the organ-loft and expressed their appreciation."

This success gave the head of the Paris firm of organ-builders, Merklin-Schutze, the idea of asking Bruckner to give a recital at their Paris factory. But the timid and conscientious master hesitated, for the leave Herbeck had granted him for Nancy had expired. He characteristically wrote to Herbeck asking "that my leave may be extended for three days. I send your Excellency, though with a very heavy heart, this request from me and all these gentlemen (he means the Paris firm) most humbly, and beg you to be so kind as to do all you can with the authorities to get them to grant what I ask. And will you be so very good as to tell my pupils?" The permission was "most graciously" granted and Bruckner played in Paris not only at Merklin's, but at Notre Dame before a distinguished audience said to have included Franck, Saint-Saëns, Auber and Gounod. His success at Nancy was repeated and again it was inspired, his

* 'Oral' in distinction to the printed notices, which (as he explains in the same letter) he was unable to read.

improvisations that made the deepest impression. "At the end I asked for a theme," he writes to Linz "It was given me by C A Chauvet, one of the greatest organists in Paris, and when I had developed it in three sections, the success was unbounded I shall never experience such a triumph again" It is very probable that the success of this foreign trip helped to get Bruckner the appointment of organist at the Vienna Hofkapelle in the following September

Two years later a second opportunity to go abroad presented itself In the summer of 1871 an International Exhibition was held in London and the Exhibition Committee invited the Chambers of Commerce of the various countries to send their most prominent organists to London During the Exhibition organ recitals were to be given on the giant organ just built by Henry Willis for the Albert Hall, close to which the Exhibition was held. When Bruckner heard of this, he applied to the Vienna Chamber of Commerce to be sent to London and, after a trial, he was unanimously chosen from a number of candidates The conditions were beginning on 2nd August he was to play twice daily for a week, for a fee of £50, including travelling and hotel expenses A detailed description of the Willis organ was sent with the contract.

A journey to London was not such a simple matter in those days and Bruckner, ever timid, implored a friend to travel with him "Then we can come back in fine style by way of Switzerland," he wrote temptingly But nothing came of this and Bruckner had to make the journey to London alone He arrived at the end of July and stayed at Seyd's Hotel, a German hotel in Finsbury Square

A story of rather doubtful veracity is told of his first day in London He had no sooner arrived than he went to the Albert Hall to try the organ It was a Saturday and the manager of the Hall explained to him that it was too late There was very little steam up—the organ was blown by steam—and Bruckner could play only as long as the steam lasted Undisturbed the master seated himself at the organ and began to practise and improvise. Enthusiastic at what he heard, the manager had the fires stoked up and sent for various friends, so that when Bruckner finished he found to his astonishment that he had a considerable audience *Si non è vero, è ben trovato*!

Besides Bruckner, six other organists had been engaged for these several weeks of recitals. W T. Best, the official organist of the Hall, who had opened the series on 18th July,

Saint-Saens from Paris, Mailly from Brussels, Lohr from Budapest, Heintzen from Stockholm, and Lindemann from Norway. Although Bruckner had already played for the first time on 2nd August the then widely-read *Musical World* published on 5th August the following rather reserved announcement. "Herr Anton Bruckner, Court Organist at Vienna, and Professor to the Conservatorium of that city, has arrived in London to play on the great organ of the Royal Albert Hall. The dates of his performance will shortly be announced. It takes some little time to become acquainted with the details of so large an instrument. Herr Bruckner's strong points are said to be classical improvisations on Handel, Bach, and Mendelssohn."

The programme of Bruckner's London debut was —
 Toccata in F major (Bach)
 Improvisations upon the foregoing—
 Fugue in D minor (Handel)
 Improvisations (original)
 Improvisations on Bach's Fugue in E minor.

From this programme one sees how very fond Bruckner was of improvisation, in which art he was, by all contemporary accounts, a past-master. Shortly before his journey to London he said to a pupil in his Upper Austrian dialect. "No, i werd net lang den Bach einwerge, dos sollen die machen, die ka Phantasie haben, i spiel uber a frei's Thema," which might be rendered. "Noa, I doan't care for grindin' out lots 'o Bach. They can do that as 'as no imagination o' their oawn. I plays away as I likes."

In the course of a week Bruckner gave six recitals at the Albert Hall with such success that August Manns, the famous conductor of the Crystal Palace Saturday Concerts, engaged him for four more. I quote here a letter of 23rd August from Bruckner to an influential Linz acquaintance—the only one so far published from which we can glean further particulars of his stay in London. "Just finished. Played ten times, six times at the Albert Hall, four times at the Crystal Palace. Tremendous applause, endless every time. Encores demanded. In particular I often had to repeat a couple of improvisations. Both places the same. Heaps of compliments, congratulations, invitations. Kapellmeister Manns of the Crystal Palace told me he was astonished and that I was to come again soon and send him my compositions. . . Yesterday I played before 70,000 people* and had to give encores as the Committee asked me to—for I didn't want to, in spite of the

* This was at the German National Fête at the Crystal Palace on 19th August.

tremendous applause. On Monday I played with equal success at the concert . N B —Unfortunately the critic of *The Times* is in Germany . so hardly anything will be written about me *now* Please let the Linz papers know something of this ”

The postscript betrays clearly that Bruckner attached some importance to having his recitals noticed by the critics. As a matter of fact, the important dailies published nothing but the bare announcements. It was summer and these recitals, given mainly for the benefit of visitors to the Exhibition, were apparently not taken very seriously in musical circles. Still, in the already mentioned *Musical World* we find reports striking a by no means enthusiastic note. There is mention of “second-rate foreigners” and of the “modest mediocrity” of some of the foreign organists and “a little discretion in the selection” of the artists is demanded (a little too late) of the management. Bruckner himself comes off comparatively well: “He has given us a grand extempore Fantasia, which although not very original in thought or design, was clever, remarkable for its canonic counterpoint and for the surmounting of much difficulty in the pedal passages.” But now comes the blow. “There can be nothing said extemporaneously upon the National Anthem of Austria, and still less upon the ‘Hallelujah’ Chorus of Handel, nor do we think any improvisation with any effect can be given upon the Toccatas of Bach or the Sonatas of Mendelssohn. Great composers exhaust their themes. Nothing can be added to the ‘Hallelujah’ Chorus, nothing to a toccata of Sebastian Bach.”

What impression was made on Bruckner by London as a town we do not know. He left at the end of August—by the way, he had begun the Finale of his second symphony here on 10th August—intending to return next year and tour the provinces. But nothing came of this. Four (!) years later he received from the Royal Exhibition Commission a medal for his successful collaboration. Once later, in 1886, he thought of coming to London to conduct his seventh symphony in place of Hans Richter, who was ill. But this plan, too, came to nothing. A few trips to Germany to hear performances of his works were the only occasions on which Bruckner went abroad in later years. Moreover, organ-playing gradually drifted into the background as Bruckner began to concentrate more and more on symphonic composition. As he once put it: “What my fingers play is forgotten, but what they have written will not be forgotten.”

BRUCKNER FESTIVALS IN AUSTRIA.

[T was Wagner, I think, to whom we owe the modern idea of big annual music festivals. Ever since he built himself in Bayreuth, a centre where, in the summer, people could hear his operas in authentic performances and with the highest possible artistic standard, his *Festspielgedanke* had been gaining ground elsewhere and was gradually made to suit music festivals of all kinds. Some of these modern festivals have remained faithful to their model by presenting practically a one-man show, the nucleus of the programmes being important works of one great composer. To enhance interest it was quite natural that in such a case organisers should have thought of choosing places for the festival which were by tradition closely associated with the particular composer, and intimately connected with his life and work. That is how the Mozart Festivals in Salzburg came into being and the same applies to the Bruckner Festivals in Linz and Upper Austria.

It may be only self-delusion to believe that knowing the places and surroundings where a composer was born and had spent most of his life enables one better to understand and appreciate his art. In many cases this would be quite immaterial for a thorough grasp of the music. But in the case of Bruckner all those who know his music well and have visited his homeland in Upper Austria instinctively feel and agree that there is some inner and strong connection between the two. In spite of changes brought about by the march of modern time Bruckner's native land has still remained the country of peasants and priests. In Bruckner's time this was certainly more evident than it is to an occasional visitor nowadays. Would it therefore appear too fanciful to suggest that much of the squareness, abruptness and robustness of Bruckner's music, much of its religious and mystical character were due to this atmosphere of country and Church? I do not think so, and every student of Bruckner confirms this view. Let us see what the surroundings were like in which Bruckner spent well over forty years of his life, the most decisive years of an artist's career.

He was born in Ansfelden, a tiny hamlet near Linz where the Bruckner family, in spite of the father being school-master, led the simple and rather primitive life of the poor

Austrian peasant At the age of eleven young Bruckner was sent to the near-by Augustinian Abbey of St Florian, to become a choir-boy there It was there that the boy saw for the first time the splendour and the display of the Catholic High Mass and heard the great settings of the Service The Abbey itself, said to be built on the spot where its eponym, the Roman Captain Florianus, died as a Christian martyr, is a magnificent and most imposing building in the baroque style. Designed by two famous Milanese architects at the end of the seventeenth century, it represents a happy blending of Roman and Germanic art. The famous organ with its five thousand pipes was Bruckner's favourite instrument, on which he used to astonish his teachers with his bold improvisations, as he did years later in London when he came here for an organ competition in 1871 The composer's mortal remains are buried under this huge organ, which is nowadays called after him

After those early years at St Florian we find Bruckner as a schoolmaster in Windhaag and Kronstorf, little villages where part of his duty was to get up at four in the morning, help the peasants on the field and cart manure—not a very congenial occupation for a budding symphonist He also had to play the fiddle for dancing at fair-time and weddings, and many a turn of these peasant tunes found its way later into the scherzos of his symphonies At the age of thirty-two he became organist at Linz Cathedral Linz itself is not a very attractive town but its beautiful surroundings make up for this lack. If one climbs the Freinberg, one of Bruckner's favourite walks, one gets a lovely panorama of the Danube winding its way through the endless plain of ploughed fields and meadows. And far down in the south you see the blue outlines of the Austrian Alps stretching along the horizon towards Salzburg Bruckner was very fond of Linz, where he had lived for thirteen years before moving to Vienna Its *genius loci* is caught, for instance, in the horn theme (first movement) of Bruckner's Fourth Symphony, the so-called "Romantic," which the composer explained as "the New Year being sounded from the town church of mediaeval Linz." Another "Bruckner spot" is Steyr, on the River Enns. The composer loved this place for its mediaeval atmosphere, which is still preserved Steyr is one of the few Gothic towns in baroque Austria With its crooked little streets and lanes, its dark old houses with towers and narrow iron gates, it is easy to fancy oneself back in the times of the Austrian peasant

wars, in which Steyr played an important rôle Bruckner often used to "escape" from Vienna, where he never felt at ease, to Linz or Steyr, and it was in the latter town, in an old parsonage, that he finished the sketches of his monumental Eighth Symphony

Linz, St Florian and Steyr are the main places where the festivals are usually held. In its present form the festival is a more recent event. But as far back as 1898 the city of Linz organised special Bruckner concerts which were given every alternate year until, in recent years, with the spreading of Bruckner's music to other countries, they expanded into large-scale international festivals. The one in July, 1936, which the present writer attended, was particularly successful from the point of view of convincing a great many foreign visitors that even a superficial acquaintance with Bruckner's homeland proved a help to a better appreciation of his music.



MAHLER IN HIS LETTERS ; (A Psychological Study).

THE letters that form the basis of this article—all that have been published up to the present, to the best of my knowledge—were written by Mahler from 1880 to 1911, mainly to more or less close friends * They cover a period of thirty-one years, during which he rose from the position of a young Kapellmeister in small Austrian provincial theatres to become the all-powerful director of the Vienna Opera and a conductor of wide reputation in America They thus form a kind of autobiography, and the fact that most of them are addressed to friends increases their value as an intimate psychological document I shall try, therefore, to use them to give a sketch of Mahler's personality His music already reveals with almost photographic distinctness the problematical, paradoxical nature of its composer, but his letters may possibly help us to have an even more definite idea of his character. Mahler's nature was one of those in which perpetual conflict reigns He was, in the technical language of modern psychology, "schizophrenic" As the etymology of the word implies, the schizophrenic man is one whose psychological make-up shows a sharp cleavage He has to face, practically from birth, a tragic conflict between the Ego and the other world In consequence he perceives himself and the world not as a natural unity but as a sharp antithesis He hardly ever finds a peaceful solution of this conflict He has a natural talent for tragedy

He may attempt to force his individual personality and ideas on the world at large, since he refuses to recognise the existing order of the real world This naturally leads to strife and opposition In art he is the pioneer, the reformer, the revolutionary who fights fanatically with a bitter tenacity for his ideals and theories He uses his whole personality to compel his contemporaries to accept the abstract world of his ideas. Berlioz, Wagner, Stravinsky and Schönberg are examples Or alternatively the schizophrenic evades the battle between the Ego and the world by retiring into himself, "spinning round him the silk of his own soul," as Strindberg

* Published by Paul Zsolnay, Vienna.

—himself an example of the type—once said. He takes refuge in a world of imagination, in which he lives with the dreams of his own desires, to which the outer world denies fulfilment. He cannot see reality as it actually is and so builds up a world of fantasy, in which the ancient world, mediaeval mysticism, nature in the raw, primitive life and the exoticism of the East all play a great part according to individual temperament. It is artists of this kind—over-sensitive, wrapped up in themselves and somewhat decadent—that we generally term “romantic.” Chopin, Schumann, Wolf, Scriabin, Debussy. In practice the two types are never sharply distinguished, but are found in combination in every schizophrenic artist, the tendency to one or the other extreme becoming from time to time more prominent.

Mahler was a remarkable mixture of the two types. He is a classic example of a soul divided against itself. Two significant facts helped to develop still further the innate character of his personality. In the first place, the whole of his development as man and as artist fell in that period of intellectual decadence and disillusionment generally described as “fin-de-siècle,” which found its literary expression in Austria at that time in the work of Schnitzler and Hofmannsthal. Secondly, Mahler was a Jew, and the Jewish race is particularly rich in examples of those tortured natures ever in conflict with the world and themselves—for instance, Heine and Offenbach. On the one hand Mahler sought out the real world, whether it was to make mankind happy with the Messianic ideas of his music or to reform it and convert it to a new artistic creed; on the other, he withdrew within himself into that unreal “romantic” world that existed only in his own imagination. His whole life and work is the expression of this dual personality. At one time it draws him without, at another within. Here lies the key to the understanding of his tragic personality and the interpretation of all that is contradictory and problematical in his art. He realised this himself quite definitely. There runs through his letters like a scarlet thread the recurring theme of the conflict between the Ego and the outer world. It is the excessive introspection, the nerve-racking analysis of self that often occurs in the letters of schizophrenic artists.

He writes in 1897 :—

“Horrible, soul-devouring Life! All my thoughts and energies are directed without and I will move further and further away from my own self. How will it all end?”

These few sentences reveal in a lightning flash the unhappy division in the composer's soul. In 1909 he speaks in a letter to Bruno Walter of the "artist's conflict" and adds —

"He is condemned to a double life, and woe to him if his life and dreams should ever become confused, so that the laws of one world exact their penalty in the other."

Mahler perpetually confused these "laws" of the real and the spiritual world. He never succeeded in reconciling these conflicting aims. His brilliant gifts as a conductor only intensified the struggle, since they forced him to devote himself wholly to the real world, while all the time the other half of his Ego was longing to tear itself away. When he was 37 he once wrote in a fit of depression —

"I get moments of discouragement in which I should like to give up music altogether and feel that the greatest joy in the world would be to pass a quiet, unregarded existence in some peaceful corner of the earth. It is above all this dreadful treadmill of the theatre that crushes my soul."

He was never able to give up the "treadmill." After resigning from the Vienna Opera he was quite in a position to afford to retire to his beloved mountains and devote himself entirely to composition. It was the ideal moment to choose. But he decided instead to accept the invitation to the Metropolitan Opera in New York. His dual personality would not let him rest, either as conductor or as composer. He pointed this out himself in a letter to Guido Adler —

"I need practical exercise for my musical ability to counterbalance the enormous creative activity that goes on within."

Strauss, the type of a nature reconciled with itself and Mahler's exact opposite among the German musicians of that time, never felt any conflict between conducting and composing. For Mahler, whatever attitude he tried to adopt towards life, the conflict was always there. The fanatical zeal and inexorable determination that are so characteristic of the schizophrenic artist who tries to force his ideas on others were partly responsible for the frequent enmity and opposition that Mahler aroused as a conductor, though no one could be blind to his genius. His cynicism, the sharp edge of his wit and a lack of consideration for others that often verged on brutality—these were the weapons with which he endeavoured to break down opposition. Not without reason did many call him a tyrant, and even as a young man he was accused of being unable to work with or for others (Wagner, who had a very similar temperament, had to fight the same battle.) Mahler was fully conscious of this side of his character. In a

letter to a lady of his acquaintance, writing of his imminent appointment as Director of the Vienna Opera, he makes a sarcastically playful reference to it —

“What do you think of the wind that is now blowing in my favour there—my ‘popularity’? At the moment I have only *three* enemies in Vienna—Jahn, Richter and Fuchs! Everyone else regards me as a charming and delightful companion. Brr! What a surprise they’re in for!”

Another theme that frequently reappears in these letters is the sense of profound loneliness. The schism of the schizophrenic type lies, as we have seen, in the fact that on the one hand he seeks the outer world and on the other, in consequence of a morbid sensibility and susceptibility, shuts himself up, so to speak, in his own shell. The result is that men of this type from time to time lose contact with the world and then get seized with an anxious feeling of loneliness and isolation. If this state of affairs continues they become eccentrics, exiles from society, suffering from a continual “*weltschmerz*.” In extreme cases, where a psychological crisis or severe mental illness takes place, this complete isolation may lead to madness and suicide—as in the case of Schumann, Wolf and Heseltine. There was actually such a case in Mahler’s family. A younger brother Otto, whom Mahler considered a much more talented musician than himself, suffered in this way and committed suicide. Mahler himself stopped short of that, but he was continually dogged by the feeling that the world had abandoned him. At the age of 34, in the prime of life, he wrote to an intimate friend:—

“I have gone through so much during the last few weeks, without any obvious occasion for it. I am in the grip of the past, of all that I have lost, of the present with its loneliness, of every conceivable thing. You know I have had these moods from my youth. I often used to get these fits of melancholy when I was in the midst of my friends. . . . There is *no one* with whom I could have anything in common, no one with whom I could share my experiences, my visions, my hopes.

Three years before his death he wrote to Bruno Walter:—

“If I am to find the way back to myself, I must surrender myself to the horrors of solitude. But after all I am only talking in riddles. You know nothing of what has been going on and is still going on within me.”

At that time Mahler had already reached the very height of his fame as a conductor and had also won recognition as a composer in the majority of circles. He was happiest—relatively, that is—when he was in retirement in the mountains, where he fled as though in panic in the summer. Here

the greater part of his creative work was done. It is characteristic of divided natures of this kind that they live at an excessively rapid tempo and their works appear as though under pressure. They feel that soon the other part of their Ego will drag them back again into the sober reality of the world. Composition does not grow peacefully and slowly, but appears by fits and starts. That is the reason why, in Mahler's style, there is much that strikes us as ragged, unco-ordinated and forced. He wanted to get all this music written in those few summer months, whereas others needed infinitely more time and repose for the work of creation. This is all the more striking since his symphonies are on a very large scale. His life was a continual race against time. Many of his letters end "I write in great haste" or "In a terrible hurry." In his barely 51 years of life he wore himself out completely. He could never have become master of this perpetual conflict within himself. Significantly he wrote in 1901. "The true enemy of man is not without, but in his own soul."

The result of this struggle against himself was weary resignation at the end of his life. The pessimism of his later years was simply the expression of that part of his Ego that tended to move away from actuality and draw him into an unreal world of imagination. "All my works," he once wrote, "are an anticipation of the life to come." In this division of his soul he was, as has already been pointed out, akin to Wagner and Tchaikovsky, in whose later works the same pessimistic tendency to withdraw from the world appeared. The music of these composers is diametrically opposed to the optimism and close contact with life expressed in the works of single and undivided natures such as Bach, Handel, Haydn, Beethoven, Verdi, Bruckner, Elgar or Strauss, with whom the problem of the Ego and the world either never arose at all or, if it did, was satisfactorily solved.

There is not space here to complete this sketch of Mahler's personality. I have had to content myself with outlining the mental basis on which his whole character rested. The peculiar nature of his personality explains why his life and work had to be what they were. An aesthetic appreciation of his music depends in the last resort on the quality of his musical inspiration, which lies outside the scope of this article.

MAHLER'S VISIT TO LONDON.

MAHLER'S only visit to London was in 1892, when he directed the German season at Covent Garden. He was then in his early thirties, but in spite of his comparative youth he had already made a remarkable reputation as a conductor, particularly as an interpreter of Wagner. At twenty-eight he had been made Director of the Royal Opera, Budapest, and during his three years' reign had raised this institution from a state of artistic decrepitude to an astonishingly high level. It was not surprising, therefore, that Bernhard Pollini, the able and far-seeing Intendant of the Hamburg Opera, selected him as principal conductor at Hamburg in 1891. Mahler's brief connection with Covent Garden also came about through Pollini.

The Hamburg Intendant had been for many years a friend of Sir Augustus Harris, then manager of Covent Garden, and Harris was contemplating as a special venture for the spring of 1892 the production of the whole "Ring" for the first time in the Covent Garden German season. "Tristan," "Tannhauser" and "Fidelio" (in German) were to be given as well. London had heard the complete "Ring" for the first time in 1882, when Angelo Neumann with his travelling Wagner company appeared at Her Majesty's, but for various reasons the complete cycle had never been completed throughout the following decade, so that Harris's project promised to be of outstanding interest.

Harris was a man with genuine theatrical instinct, full of initiative, and he knew the secret of successful opera production—to employ nothing but the best. first-rate singers, and first-rate *décor*. (It is on this principle that all the great opera-directors have worked successfully, from Angelo Neumann at the Prague Landestheater to Toscanini at La Scala.) Accordingly, Harris engaged through Pollini the finest German artists obtainable. In addition to the Bayreuth stars, Rosa Sucher and Theodor Reichmann, his singers included others then less known but who were later to become celebrities. Ernestine Schumann-Heink, Katharina Klatsky, Katarina Bettaque, Max Alvary, Julius Lieban, and others. The magnitude of his plan obliged Harris also to engage a fifth conductor for the German operas in addition to the four

MAHLER'S VISIT TO LONDON

for the Italian and French works. Mancinelli, afterwards Puccini's friend, Beignani, Randegger, and Jéhin. He thought first of Wagner's faithful apostle, Richter. But Richter was engaged in Vienna and could not come for the whole season. So, on Pollini's advice, Harris decided to engage Mahler instead, and, with him, a part of the Hamburg Orchestra.

Harris had now collected a choice band of German artists and was justified in announcing that his company included "an unprecedented combination of the first musical talent of Europe."

Directly his journey to London was decided on Mahler began to learn English. For this purpose he kept a note book in which he conscientiously entered the expressions and phrases used in the theatre. A certain Dr. Berliner, a Hamburg friend of Mahler's, to whom were addressed the letters given below,* has told, later, how on their daily walks he had to "examine" Mahler and make him introduce these idioms of the theatre into conversation. At the beginning of June Mahler came to London to direct the rehearsals at Covent Garden and Drury Lane, and at once wrote to Berliner in English, so as to show his friend what progress he had made. There is no date—the majority of Mahler's letters were hardly ever dated—but the letter is post-marked 9th June, 1892.—

"69, Torrington Square, W.C.

"DEAR BERLINER!

I shall only give you the address of my residence, because I hope to hear by you upon your life and other circumstances in Hambourg.

I myself am too tired and excited and not able to write a letter.

Only, that I found the circumstances of orchestra here bader than thought and the cast better than hoped.

Next Wednesday is the performance of 'Siegfried' which God would bless.

Alvay Siegfried, Grengg Wotan,
Sucher Brunnhilde, Lieban Mime.

This is the most splendid cast I yet heard, and this is my only trust in these very careful times.

Please to narrate me about all and am

Yours, Mahler

I make greater progress in English as you can observe in this letter."

* From "Gustav Mahler Briefe," edited by Alma Maria Mahler, Vienna, 1925.

After the performance of "Siegfried" on 8th June he writes enthusiastically to Berliner, again in English. —*

"DEAR BERLINER !

Siegfried—*great* success I am *myself* satisfied of, the performance *Orchestra beautiful* Singers excellently—Audience delighted and much thankfull

Mittwoch Tristan (Sucher)

I am quite *done up* !

Yours, Mahler "

The success of the Wagner season under Mahler must indeed have been enormous, judging from the press notices, which were unanimous in praise of the new conductor's extraordinary ability. In *The Times* the sentence "Herr Mahler conducted excellently as usual" recurred invariably, and the *Morning Post* wrote of his "Tristan" : "Only the word "perfect" can describe the orchestra, which achieved wonders under the direction of Herr Mahler "

During his stay Mahler made the acquaintance of Herman Klein, then the critic of the *Sunday Times*, who has given a graphic impression of Mahler's personality and manner of conducting in his book, "The Golden Age of Opera" (1933) :—

"Mahler was now in his thirty-second year. He was rather short, of thin, spare build, with a dark complexion and small piercing eyes that stared at you with a not unkindly expression through large gold spectacles. I found him extraordinarily modest for a musician of his rare gifts and established reputation. He would never consent to talk about himself or his compositions. Indeed the latter might have been non-existent for all that one ever heard about them†, but his efforts to speak English, even with those who spoke German fluently, were untiring as well as amusing, though they tended to prolong conversation "

Klein was afterwards present at a rehearsal of "Tristan" at Drury Lane, on Mahler's own invitation. He writes —

"And then it was that I began to realise the remarkable magnetic power and technical mastery of Mahler's conducting. He reminded me in many ways of Richter, he used the same strong, decisive beat, there was the same absence of fussiness or superfluous action, the same clear, unmistakable definition of time and rhythm. His men, whom he rehearsed first of all in sections, soon understood him without difficulty. Hence the unity of idea and expression existing between orchestra and singers that distinguished these performances of the 'Ring' under Mahler as compared with any previously seen in London "

* The italics indicate those words which Mahler underlined

† Mahler had already made a name for himself as a composer with his completion of Weber's sketches for the opera, "Die drei Pintos," his "Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen" and his first Symphony. He was then working at his second Symphony.

(It was this "unity of expression existing between orchestra and singers" that later made the Vienna Opera, during the ten years of Mahler's directorate, the foremost artistic institution in the world)

In the course of this brilliant season Mahler also conducted "Fidelio," which was given in London for the first time in German. The London public had hitherto known Beethoven's opera only through a few performances in Italian, with recitatives by Balfe and others, and had no great opinion of it. All the more remarkable, therefore, was the popular success of the German production, a success to which the superlative performance of Katharina Klafsky (announced as "the great German Fidelio") contributed not a little. On the other hand, Mahler received sharp criticism from one section of the press on account of his novel interpretation—particularly of the "Leonora" Overture. The critic of the *Daily Telegraph* wrote.—

"Mr. Mahler and his orchestra showed the ill-success which generally attends new 'readings' of old works. As to this, his interpretation of the 'Leonora' Overture was really and truly a 'caution.' It is common nowadays to regard un-conventionality as a virtue, and he who protests against it must be prepared for hard words; nevertheless, we venture to say that the greatest of operatic preludes was very badly treated. What authority has the Hambourg conductor for the slow opening of the Allegro and the *accelerando* which immediately followed, or for similar interference with the tempo at the beginning of the Presto Coda? These are but examples of several features that went to make up the un-conventionality of the whole. But why complain? The works of great masters are fair game for editors and solo executants, should not conductors also have a share in the maltreatment? They are all superior to the composers, who, unluckily, died without the advantage of their wisdom."

However, judging from the following letter to his Hamburg friend (this time in German), Mahler does not seem to have taken this very much to heart. "My performance of 'Fidelio'—particularly the 'Leonora' Overture—has been most violently attacked by half the critics here, all the same the public absolved me from my blasphemy with a regular *hurricane* of applause—in fact, they overwhelm me with endless tokens of sympathy. I've got to go before the curtain literally after *every act*—the whole house yells 'Mahler' till I appear. . ." Incidentally, in these performances Mahler still played the "Leonora" Overture before the beginning of the second Act; it was, I believe, only later, in Vienna, that he first inserted it before the Finale as "transformation

music " This practice has been adhered to ever since by almost all conductors, with the exception of Weingartner

Mahler was also to have conducted Nessler's sentimental opera, "Der Trompeter von Sackingen," which was then enjoying a considerable vogue in Germany But he managed to evade the task and the *Morning Post* noted curtly that "Herr Mahler is evidently not in sympathy with this work, for he relinquished the baton to Herr Feld . "

Why did Mahler never return to London, in spite of his great success here ? Undoubtedly because his work as a composer absorbed him more and more, and the theatre holidays at Hamburg—and later in Vienna—were the only periods in which he was able to devote himself undisturbed to his creative work The next occasions on which he conducted in a non-German country were (besides a concert in Moscow in March, 1897) during the years 1908-11, when he was in America



FORM AND TECHNIQUE OF MAHLER'S "SONG OF THE EARTH."

THE main tendency of the post-Beethovenian symphonists was to interpret the symphonic form in terms of psychological drama. This tendency, first to be noticed in Beethoven, chiefly accounts for the changes which the symphonic form underwent in its treatment by the various composers. The tone-poem on the one hand and the "psychological" symphony on the other—the symphony with a programme—were the offsprings of this new approach. With Mahler it became the basis of his symphonic thinking. That is why in every one of his symphonic works we are faced with some interesting formal and technical problem. If for Mahler the various stages of music's course within the symphonic form became identical with the *peripeteta* of a drama, it is equally true that by force of habit or otherwise he had to express everything in a symphonic manner. Thus it becomes clear why even in those cases where he wrote vocal music the form of which was in the first place conditioned by the words, he attempted an amalgamation of vocal and symphonic style, as witness the vocal sections in his second, third, fourth and eighth symphonies, and his many songs most of which, significantly enough, were written to an orchestral accompaniment. This amalgamation of two intrinsically different styles is noticeable both in the form and the technique adopted in these sections. Seen in this light Mahler's "Song of the Earth" will provide us with a good object for study.

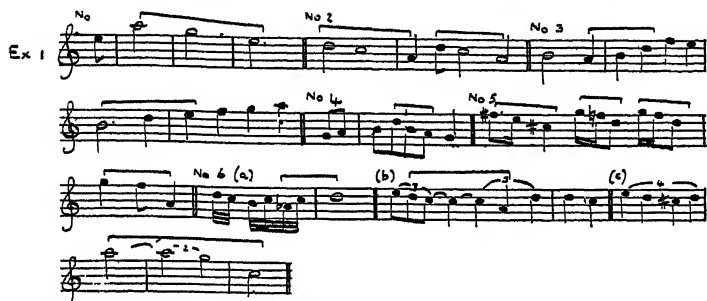
Mahler called this work a "Symphony for tenor, contralto (or baritone) and orchestra." At a first glance this seems rather odd. Had he called it a cantata nothing would have puzzled us in this title. But as there was an intention behind this title, it will be interesting to see its significance and ultimate justification. Mahler chose from an anthology of Chinese verse six poems and arranged their sequence in such a way that they must be taken as representing a drama with the "catastrophe" in the last poem. Now Mahler could have set them in the same manner as he did with his "Kindertotenlieder," that is, as a cycle of songs in which the symphonic treatment was of secondary importance. Not so in the "Song of the Earth." What Mahler sought to express here was to him so fraught with meaning that to treat these poems as mere songs would have been inadequate. Short of writing

a symphony with a programme, which would have been based on these Chinese poems, he chose to steer a novel course, that of combining features of the symphony, cantata and song in one, and of amalgamating them to such an extent that the result was a wholly organic work.

Generally speaking, the features of the cantata and song are more easily recognisable—as, for instance, in the six-movement form of the work, the employment of two soloists, the strong, all-pervading lyricism, and the almost constant use of the human voice. But closer examination of the contrasting character, different “weight” and sequence of the six movements shows that Mahler had the model of a four-movement symphony at the back of his mind. No 1 (*Allegro pesante*) takes the place of a symphonic first movement, No 2 (*Etwas schleppend, ermüdet*) stands for the Andante. And No 3 (*Behaglich, heiter*), No 4 (*Commodo, dolcissimo*) and No. 5 (*Allegro*), which are all akin in mood, combine to represent the Scherzo. That these three movements belong together is also borne out by their respective keys, which are all in the major (B, G and A), whereas the “heavier” movements, Nos 1, 2 and 6, are in the minor (A, D and C). Finally, No 6 (*Schwer*) provides the symphonic finale. In accordance with the tendency of the symphony since Beethoven to shift its centre of gravity from the first movement to the last and thus work through the individual movements up to a climax and final solution of conflict, the finale of “Song of the Earth” is not only the largest of the six movements, but also in its depth of feeling and emotional poignancy the greatest. Moreover, it brings the final solution of the whole work, if only a negative and pessimistic one. So much for the general formal outline.

As regards the relation between voice and orchestra, a similar synthesis of song and symphonic elements is to be found. The vocal line expresses the general feeling and mood of the poems, whereas the orchestra deepens the expression, discusses the detailed meaning of the words, and follows the slight changes of mood more closely than the voice could ever do. This procedure is quite in Wagner's style. But Mahler, with his strong lyrical vein, follows the line of Schumann and Brahms and never lets his vocal melody become declamatory. Almost throughout the work the voice-part retains a truly singing quality; and in spite of irregularities caused by the inter-play between voice and orchestra, the periodic structure of the vocal melody is quite noticeable. The symphonic element appears in the growth of the main

themes out of a germ motive which represents a segment of one of the Chinese pentatonic scales, and which appears in every possible shape and disguise throughout the work.



It thus provides a thematic link between the six movements.

After these general remarks it might be well to examine a few points in detail. In the first movement the song-element lies primarily in its strophic form, each of the three stanzas having essentially the same music, and in the cantabile nature of the voice part. Against this must be set the symphonic relation between the voice and the instruments in the manner described above. Moreover, the three stanzas show a definite modulatory scheme which is very similar to the modulations in the development sections and, in fact, Mahler extends the last stanza by a kind of development of the main theme. The second movement also has strophic form, and a sustained vocal melody embedded in the orchestra, which is treated symphonically. There is also a kind of second subject, which appears first in the sub-median and later in the tonic major, the key being D minor. Remarkable in this piece is the polyphony, which already points to the linear style of modern music.—



In passages like this the influence of Bach's treatment of the voice with one or two obligato instruments is easily detected. In others, again, with an orchestral accompaniment richly endowed with thematic motives, Mahler adopts the principles of what Beethoven used to call "Obligates Akkompagnement."

It is significant that in movements 3, 4 and 5, which belong together, the symphonic treatment is much less marked. If we remember the suggestion that these three movements combined represent the Scherzo of the symphony, and that even the classical minuet and scherzo show a comparatively simpler and less symphonic texture than the other movements, it will be easy to see why Mahler here preferred a more homophonic treatment. Moreover, the relation between voice and orchestra is here much less intricate and subtle than in Nos. 1 and 2, and the vocal line is for the most part identical with the instrumental melody, so that No. 4, for instance, could be played as a purely orchestral piece without the voice, which would be quite impossible in the case of Nos. 1, 2 or 6. That Nos. 3, 4 and 5 take the place of the classical minuet or scherzo is further borne out by their dance-like character, which is particularly noticeable in Nos. 3 and 4.

With No. 6 we get to the most complex movement of the work. It has the finale character of the later romantic symphony and perhaps shows best the amalgamation of elements from the symphony, cantata and song. As in the previous movements the song-character lies in the cantabile voice part and its periodic structure, the three recitatives—modern examples of eighteenth-century *recitativo accompagnato*—and the juxtaposition of three lyrical and self-contained sections with themes of their own point to the cantata. These three sections are linked together by the text, and musically by the germ motive. Yet one feels that this link would not have been sufficient to prevent the movement from falling to pieces and thus losing its unity. Mahler's great constructive skill is shown in the way in which he avoids this danger. He casts the whole movement in a free sonata form with three different subjects, with a "development" of the first subject—a kind of funeral march—and with a regular recapitulation in which even the modulatory scheme of the classical *reprise* is observed (exposition in C minor, recapitulation in C minor-C major). Thus the movement is welded into an organic and logical form which, at the same time, follows the drama of the text. The manner in which the various sections of sonata form are here made to fit quite naturally the different stages of this drama is a masterpiece of structural ingenuity, and very rare in a vocal work of symphonic form. It is both for aesthetic and, as I have tried to show, for formal and technical reasons that Mahler's "Song of the Earth" occupies a unique position among the works of the later German romantics.

MAHLER'S RE-SCORING OF THE SCHUMANN SYMPHONIES.

IT will always remain a moot point whether the re-scoring of a work by any hand but the composer's is justifiable. The purist will always be opposed to it on principle, and he finds strong support for his attitude in the present-day tendency to what the Germans call "werktreue"—strict faithfulness to the original both in interpretation and re-editing. Yet the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries thought differently, as witness Mozart's additions to the "Messiah," Rimsky-Korsakoff's edition of "Boris Godunov," Wagner's alterations to "Iphigénie en Aulide" and the Choral Symphony, and the Bruckner Symphonies in the versions by Ferdinand Lowe and the Schalk brothers. The fact that musicians of such standing did something that to many of us is nowadays anathema should make us hesitate before siding unreservedly with the purist—particularly as most of the above works are still performed in their "revised" form far more often than in their original one.

It is a little late in the day to discuss whether these revisions, alterations, and adaptations were necessary, for public and critics alike have long accepted them. What is more important is the fact that the musicians responsible were not only experienced composers and conductors, they were also intimately acquainted with the style of the composers whose work they revised. These factors are an essential safeguard against the pitfalls of style and taste that lurk on the path of the revisor.

This brings us to Mahler's re-scoring of the four Schumann Symphonies. Mahler was both a first-rate composer and great conductor and an experienced hand at the business of revisions, adaptations and orchestral alterations, as he had previously proved with his revision of Weber's "Oberon," his completion, with the aid of the composer's sketches, of Weber's fragmentary "Die drei Pintos,"* and his orchestral alterations in the Choral Symphony. He knew the Schumann Symphonies intimately. Moreover, he was a typical romantic whose spiritual kinship with Schumann is singularly striking, and expresses itself musically in certain resemblances of style.

* This version was first performed under Mahler's direction at the Neues Stadt-Theater, Leipzig, on 20th January, 1880.

Mahler was thus fully qualified for the delicate and by no means simple task of re-scoring the symphonies.*

Yet it may be pertinent to ask whether Mahler's re-scoring was necessary at all. It may be argued that, as these symphonies have been played in their original scoring ever since they were written and have established themselves in this form, there is no need for another version. In reply to this one need only point to the endless complaints by conductors and critics of the defects of Schumann's instrumentation. These very complaints justify Mahler's undertaking, but the law of inertia is so potent in the world of music that performances of the Mahler versions have so far been exceedingly rare.

To say that Schumann had no orchestral sense is an exaggeration as gross as it is common. One need only look at the scores of, say, the Piano Concerto, the "Manfred" Overture, or the "Romanze" from the Fourth Symphony to see that his scoring was at times imaginative, delicate, and skilful. But taking his orchestral works as a whole it cannot be denied that they suffer from heavy and thick scoring, from insensitiveness to instrumental colours, from clumsiness in the use of certain individual instruments, and a frequent disregard for the inherent dynamic peculiarities of the orchestra.

Now how did Mahler tackle his task? His alterations may be classified under seven heads —

- (1) Lightening of thick instrumental textures
- (2) Throwing into relief of thematic lines and rhythmic patterns
- (3) Changes in dynamics and re-scoring of certain dynamic effects
- (4) Improvement of phrasing.
- (5) Changes in the manner of playing
- (6) Thematic alterations.
- (7) Suggestions for cuts †

The result of these changes is greater orchestral transparency, greater prominence of thematic lines and essential rhythms, and subtler gradation and greater variety of tone-colour and dynamics. Not a single movement in the four

* There is no printed edition of Mahler's version. But his alterations have been marked on a number of copies of the original scores which are on hire from Messrs Boosey & Hawkes (Universal Edition), London, who have kindly given me permission to use them for the purpose of this article.

† The last four groups have, strictly speaking, little to do with the actual business of re-scoring. But Mahler's work was a thorough revision rather than merely a re-orchestration.

symphonies remained untouched, and in some of them Mahler's alterations and corrections cover many pages of the score. It is, of course, impossible to give here a detailed account of all these, but a number of examples will suffice to illustrate Mahler's methods.

Schumann's heaviness of texture is usually the result of unnecessary and often clumsy doubling of melodic lines and unessential middle-parts. Take, for instance, the passage in III 2, bars 25-29*. It is a quick and short *piano stretto* with a subject in *staccato* semiquavers. Schumann scores this passage for strings with all the wood-wind—except oboes—doubling them, and adds insignificant rhythmic note-repetitions on horns and trumpets. The polyphonic nature of the passage demands, however, a lighter and more transparent scoring, so Mahler eliminates the wood-wind and brass, and by this simple alteration arrives at a lighter texture, a softer *piano*, a better *staccato*, a crisper string tone, and a welcome contrast of colour when the wood-wind enter after this string passage.

Such lightening is frequently associated with colour contrasts and freshness of tone, as in Mahler's alteration at the opening of IV 3, Trio. Schumann doubles the flutes (which have the theme) with the clarinets in the lower octave for sixteen bars; Mahler allows the clarinets to rest during the first eight bars and only then continues with the original scoring. He thus gets both increased sonority and a new blend of colour in the second phrase.


There are, on the other hand, instances when Schumann, for the sake of colour contrast, introduces fresh instruments which only thicken the texture by unnecessary doublings, and also tend to disturb the basic colour scheme as at the opening of III 3, with its addition, after two bars, of oboes and horns which are given merely harmonic filling, and upset the balance of colour which Mahler restores by the simple elimination of the added instruments.

Another frequent device of Mahler's for loosening the texture is to alter *a due* passages, or passages scored for different instruments in unison or octaves, into *soli*, as in the cadenza-like figure of I 1, bars 19-20, with Mahler's solo flute in place of Schumann's flute and oboe.

Unnecessary doublings of inessential middle-parts are for obvious reasons more keenly felt in the brass than in any other group. This accounts for the great number of alterations to be found in Schumann's brass parts. His treatment is

*Roman figures indicate the symphony, Arabic ones the movement.

Another factor that largely contributes to the heaviness of Schumann's brass scoring is his tendency to over-stress the rhythm by mere repetitions which represent the rhythmic skeleton of a particular melodic pattern. Take the D major section from IV 2, with its monotonous bare horn rhythm

and  by the combined forces of horns, trumpets,

and timpani. In these and similar other cases Mahler uses his blue pencil ruthlessly, or else he resorts to the ingenious device of distributing these skeletons between two groups of instruments, adding at the same time contrasting dynamics as in I 1, bars 209-13 —

No 1

4 Horns

(Schumann)

1. 8 Horns

(Mahler)

2. 4 Horns

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an altogether subtler and more effective way than Schumann's scoring for four horns, *fortissimo* in unison

The timpani being rhythmic instruments *par excellence* it is not surprising to find here similar overstatements of the rhythm Schumann's usually reinforces the timpani with purely rhythmic trumpets—a characteristic device of the classical method of scoring which Schumann applies, however, too mechanically and perfunctorily Mahler's version uses the reinforcement only occasionally

If Schumann's treatment of the strings cannot be regarded as model scoring he had at any rate a greater experience and knowledge of their special technique than of any other instrument except, of course, the piano Yet even with them he makes the same mistake of superfluous doublings as in II 1, four bars after B —

Nº 2

Violins

Vla Cellos & Basses

By allowing the upper strings to rest for nearly three bars Mahler not only rids the melodic line of its thickness and thus, incidentally, gives it more edge, but also keeps the violins fresh for their entry on the *legato* phrase Instead of wholesale elimination as in the above example, Mahler sometimes distributes the melodic line more subtly between the two originally doubling instruments, as in I 4, bars 10-13 :—

Nº 3

1 Viol

2 Viol (Schumann)

(Mahler)

Somewhat similar is the alteration in the D major section of IV 2. Mahler here changes the original violin solo into an alternation between solo and tutti and thus creates both a contrast of colour and an instrumental dialogue of good effect.

Mahler's throwing into relief of thematic lines and rhythmic patterns is generally based on the technique of what I called elsewhere "architectural scoring"* This technique is guided by considerations of structural clarity as opposed to more pictorial and colouristic methods In practice these two opposite ways of scoring—comparable to the antithesis of line and colour in painting—are rarely separated—if we disregard such exceptional cases as the music of the true impressionists or the "Farbenmelodie" of Schonberg's middle period. Composers have by instinct always tried to strike a fair balance between these two principles. It is, however, natural that in the symphony where the architectural and thematic elements are of particular importance, architectural scoring should often predominate On the whole this applies to the Schumann Symphonies But Schumann's lack of a keen sense of the orchestral *palette* often jeopardises his intention of scoring architecturally. His thematic lines are often blurred and drowned by over-scored middle-parts, his melodies often lie in a register—usually a low one—in which the particular instrument does not "speak" or carry well, or else are scored too thinly and given to the wrong instrument altogether He also pays insufficient attention to the marking off of larger and smaller architectural units, such as periods, middle sections in tripartite forms, first and second subjects, etc., by contrasted scoring To correct such organic defects was a much more difficult task than the lightening of thick textures But Mahler's skill in getting under Schumann's skin helped him to make good quite a number of such deficiencies

One simple device he uses is to transpose melodic wood-wind passages an octave higher, particularly on oboes and clarinets which Schumann frequently uses in their lower middle register. Sometimes Mahler scores melodic lines for wood-wind *a due* where Schumann employs only a single instrument, or he doubles the original scoring by the addition of instruments which in the original have only harmonic filling to play This latter procedure has the advantage of combining the re-drawing of the melodic line with the loosening of the texture, as it reduces the number of "thick" background instruments

* See article "A. Beethoven Movement and Its Successors"

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Schumann also seems to have had an aversion from using flutes and clarinets in their highest registers. He sometimes breaks the logic of his part-writing either by transposing the flutes and clarinets into the lower octave, after a few initial bars, or by taking their parts to a lower note of the harmony, thus distorting the melodic line. Mahler corrects this by simply continuing the part in its initial register.

A singularly effective device of Mahler's is to free the brass, particularly horns and trumpets, from their task of stodgy harmonic padding and use them more for melodic purposes—chiefly to underline themes and important motifs as far as this was consistent with the general balance of sound. The markedly melodic treatment of horns and trumpets is, however, characteristic of late romantic and modern music and the result partly of the greater complexity of symphonic writing, partly of the technical improvements in the instruments, during the last sixty years. To introduce this method of brass scoring into Schumann's symphonies was an unquestionable anachronism. Yet the gain to their orchestral texture in flexibility and clarity is so great that even the purist may well close his eyes for once. In order to appreciate the full import of the following alteration (I 1, bars 281-89) —

No 4

1st F
HORNS
2nd Bb
TRPT 1st Bb

the passage should be compared with its original. It is a *stretto* with the main thematic motif as subject, and one can see at a glance how much more distinct its various entries become in Mahler's re-scoring. Schumann here uses horns and trumpets in the most insignificant way, whereas Mahler makes them play an important part in clarifying the structural build of the passage. It is usually in *stretti* that Mahler resorts

to such melodically treated brass

Somewhat similar to this treatment are certain alterations of Schumann's timpani parts. They originated in the composer's peculiar tendency to keep on the whole to the tuning indicated at the beginning of each movement. The result is that his timpani part often does not coincide with the true bass, but consists of any middle note of the harmony which happens to be identical with one or the other note of the initial tuning, as in the following example (I 4, bars 66-71) —*



Mahler's version of such timpani parts has the true bass, which makes the line altogether clearer. Similar in effect is Mahler's addition of fresh notes, which also adds more bite to the rhythm in the bass. These corrections demand frequent and often very quick changes of the tuning which, if they have to be made in fast tempo, require either pedal timpani or the use of three kettle-drums, as in the first and last movements of the Fourth Symphony.

A singularly curious alteration which occurs in the slow movement preceding the finale of the Third Symphony deserves special mention. In bars 50-52 and 65-67, Mahler transposes the original timpani E flat an octave lower to



a note which to my knowledge is never used on

this instrument, though it is possible to tune it down to such low pitch. By this most unusual alteration Mahler apparently aimed at a very hollow and muffled sound in order to enhance the religious and mysterious character of these passages †

* Schumann's slipshod treatment of his timpani basses reminds one of the curious practice in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries when, since notes on the timpani are not very distinct in pitch, composers did not bother about the necessary *mutatio* after they had modulated to other keys and thus actually wrote wrong notes—mostly, however, in *forte* tutti passages where such clashes could hardly be heard. Thus Verdi, in the first finale of "Un Ballo in Maschera," still wrote some notes on the timpani which do not fit into the harmony at all. This was as late as 1859.

† It will be remembered that this beautiful movement was inspired by the solemn ceremony of the Cologne Archbishop's elevation to the cardinalate.

The string department shows fewer alterations made for the sake of clearer thematic outline. Yet such alterations as do occur are of importance. Schumann is often inclined to score quick melodic runs rather thinly, usually for the first violins only, so that this group has to contend against a heavy accompaniment single-handed. Mahler's common procedure in such cases is to reinforce these runs by doubling the first with the second violins and violas, in unison or octaves. As in Schumann's scoring, the latter are usually given the accompaniment. Mahler's corrections not only throw the thematic line into better relief, but loosen the string texture by reducing the number of accompanying parts. An excellent large-scale illustration of this procedure is to be found in Mahler's version of the string parts of the first movement of the Fourth Symphony, particularly in the development section with its characteristic alternation between first violins and 'cellos and, later, between strings and combined wood-wind. Another device of Mahler's to improve such thinly scored passages is to transfer the accompaniment from the second violins to the violas *divisi* and to use the former for the support of the first-violin melody, as at the opening of the *Larghetto* from the First Symphony, where the rich sound of the combined violins adds greatly to the beauty of the passage.

Mahler's skill becomes particularly evident when we come to passages in which he combines various devices. One of the best examples is to be found in III 1, eight bars before N. (See Example on page 124.)

This passage—significantly enough, again a *stretto*—marks the end of the development section and leads at N—the climax of the movement—to the recapitulation. Mahler's alterations in these eight bars are a model of architectural scoring, and a comparison with Schumann's original yield the following points: (1) greater prominence of the thematic line on double basses, 'cellos, violas and first violins, by (a) augmentation of note-values, (b) reinforcement by the second violins, (2) loosening of the texture by (a) elimination of trumpets and timpani with their bare rhythmic skeleton, thus keeping them fresh for their entry on the climax, (b) introduction into the horn parts of occasional breathing spaces, (c) reduction of doublings in the middle-parts, (3) greater differentiation and grading of dynamics. The result is a considerable increase in clarity and plasticity of texture, rhythm and dynamics.

As for alterations of, and additions to, Schumann's dynamic

OF MEN AND MUSIC

markings, Mahler simply records what every experienced conductor does by word of mouth in rehearsal in order to achieve a good balance of sound and a contrast of light and

No 6

a)

HORNS
in E \flat

TRPT
in E \flat

TIMP

1 VIOL

2 VIOL

VLA.

CELLOS
& BASS

(Schumann)

b)

HORNS
in E \flat

TRPT
in E \flat

TIMP

1 VIOL

2 VIOL

VLA.

CELLOS
& BASS

(Mahler)

shade. For it is a common experience with most orchestral music before Wagner and Liszt that its dynamic markings do not seem to take into full account the peculiarities of orchestral dynamics as revealed in practice. For instance, the wood-wind can never be toned down to the same level of *p* or *pp* as the strings. Accompaniment on the brass will always—to the annoyance of every conductor—stand out conspicuously if marked with the same dynamics as the rest of the orchestra. There are long-drawn *crescendi* and *diminuendi* which orchestral players will for certain psychological reasons always start too soon, thus jeopardizing an evenly distributed increase or decrease in the volume of sound, and other such pitfalls of orchestral playing. Paradoxical as it may seem, the conductor who in classical and romantic works keeps faithfully to the original dynamics will never quite achieve the dynamic balance intended by the composer, as the conductor does who introduces intelligent modifications. This applies particularly to symphonic works of the romantic period in which emotional and pictorial elements play a preponderant part and which, consequently, require a greater measure of dynamic contrast and shading. Naturally, such alterations are partly subject to individual taste. Yet provided the conductor is a sound musician—not merely a deft gesticulator—and endowed with a natural feeling for style, his dynamic alterations will unquestionably improve the quality of the performance.

Now Mahler's qualifications in this respect are beyond dispute. All the same, in his dynamic alterations of the Schumann symphonies, he tends to over-mark the scores, to introduce too many dynamic gradations, and thus to impart to the symphonies a degree of restlessness that seems too strong for Schumann's style, although one has to admit that an element of nervous agitation does underlie much of Schumann's music. But taking a broader view, it is arguable whether Mahler's dynamic alterations do not come nearer to Schumann's intentions, despite his occasional lapses, than the drily objective readings of certain modern conductors.

On practically every page of Mahler's version there are new *<* *>* or *< f* or *> p* marks, which, in most cases, correspond to what every orchestral player with a natural musical feeling does by instinct. Moreover, Mahler makes more frequent use of both extremes of the dynamic scale (*pp* and *ppp*, *ff* and *fff*) and the intermediate (*mp* and *mf*) than Schumann does. This at times leads to exaggerated dynamic contrasts as Mahler is inclined to change over within a very

short space from *pp* to *ff* and vice-versa. Such sudden contrasts are clearly not in keeping with Schumann's general orchestral style and are not free from superficial effects as in the coda of the third movement of the First Symphony, where at the transition from the *come sopra ma un poco piu lento* section to the *quasi presto* conclusion, Mahler alters the original *pp-mf* into *ppp-ff*, or—even more strikingly—at the opening of the finale of the Third Symphony, where he changes the original *f* of the first eight bars to *pp* and follows this in the next eight bars by a *ff* instead of the original *f* '.

But there is a group of dynamic alterations which is more than justified. Bearing in mind the dynamic peculiarities of the various orchestral departments and their individual instruments, Mahler introduces changes that aim at a more varied gradation and a better balance of sound. Take the passage in IV, 1, at letter G, where Mahler replaces Schumann's uniform *ff* by the following gradation —

Woodwind *fff*
Horns *ff*
Trumpets *p*
Trombones *mf*
Timpani *ff*
Strings *ff*

By toning down the trumpets and trombones, which have only harmonic filling to play, and bringing up the wood-wind, Mahler throws the thematic motif into greater relief. In I, 1, bars 126-28, Mahler alters the original *ff* of the wood-wind and brass to *ffp* while the strings continue *ff* so that the sustained chords of the first two groups are prevented from drowning the strings, as they are bound to do in Schumann's scoring.

In a second category of alterations, Mahler tries to achieve certain dynamic effects, particularly long-drawn *crescendi* and *diminuendi*, by appropriate re-scoring. This "scoring of dynamics" is a more organic and at the same time subtler way of getting the intended dynamic results than merely putting in the usual markings. Mahler's alterations of this kind are legion, and he uses here all the various devices discussed previously. An excellent large-scale illustration of this method is his scoring of a long *crescendo* in the coda of II, 2. Schumann scores the whole of this coda *tutti* and *forte*, inevit-

* Mahler's own works are full of such sudden contrasts, and suffer from dynamic over-markings which only hamper the flexibility and natural flow of orchestral playing.

MAHLER'S RE-SCORING OF THE SCHUMANN SYMPHONIES

ably resulting in dynamic monotony Mahler builds up a gradual *crescendo* with the dynamic climax about the middle of the coda, as seen from the following example —

No 7

(Schumann)

		Flutes
		Oboes
		Clarinets
		Bassoons
	Horns	Horns
	Trumpets	Trumpets
	Timpani	Timpani
	Strings	Strings

2 bars			36 bars		
(Mahler)					
				Flutes	Flutes
				Oboes	Oboes
				Clarinets	Clarinets
				Bassoons	Bassoons
Horns	Oboes		Clarinets	Clarinets	Horns
Trumpets	Clarinets		Bassoons	Bassoons	Trumpets
Timpani	Bassoons		Horns	Horns	Timpani
Strings	Strings	Strings	Strings	Strings	Strings
2 bars	4 bars	7 bars	4 bars	5 bars	16 bars

Mahler was, in his own works, very explicit and generous with his phrasing marks, and a prominent feature of his conducting was his insistence upon intelligent and intelligible phrasing. Therefore it is not surprising that he also tackled this aspect of the Schumann symphonies. A device most frequently applied is his introduction of short rests which contribute largely to a clear articulation. Schumann's uneconomical way of keeping the strings busy most of the time explains why this kind of alteration is to be found chiefly in this department. In some cases short rests are also introduced to heighten the original *staccato* effect, as in the first Trio of the First Symphony.

Other of Mahler's changes in the manner of playing include additions of fresh *pizzicati*, *sul tasto*, the demand for "Schalltrichter aufheben" (the lifting of the bell) of trumpets, thus increasing the carrying power of the tone,* and the use of muted trombones.

Mahler wisely refrained from any major thematic alterations. There are only a few minor changes, the most important of which is to be found at the very beginning of the first

* In his own works Mahler makes frequent use of this device

movement of the First Symphony where Mahler restores Schumann's original version of the opening call on the horns and trumpets. This motif originally read B flat—G—A—B flat, that is, a major third lower than the present version, and thus it corresponded with the very opening of the *Allegro* section (1st and 2nd violins). Due to the fact, however, that Schumann had only "natural" brass instruments at his disposal, the notes G and A had to be stopped while B flat was the eighth harmonic on an instrument in B flat was an open note. Thus the phrase must have sounded very uneven and almost comic in its sharp dynamic and colour contrast. Hence Schumann's subsequent transposition, which presented no such problems to the players as the notes C and D constitute the respective ninth and tenth harmonics of the fundamental B flat. It was one of those cases where the limitations of valveless instruments interfered with the composer's full realisation of his intention as is, for instance, so well illustrated by Beethoven's treatment of the horns and trumpets in his Seventh and Ninth Symphonies. Mahler, thinking of the modern instruments with valves for which Schumann's original phrase has nowadays no difficulties, quite logically went back to it.

Another perfectly reasonable alteration occurs in II, 2, M, to four bars after the letter, where Mahler transforms the insignificant rhythmic figure on horns and trumpets into the trumpet call, with which the first movement opens, combining it with the chief motif of Trio No. 2.



Mahler suggests a few justifiable cuts in the lengthy and repetitive finale of the Second Symphony. They are given here for the benefit of conductors who do not possess a copy of the Mahler version.

- | | | | |
|-----|-----------|------------------|----------------|
| (a) | From bars | 398 inclusive to | 422 inclusive. |
| (b) | " | 438 | " 441 " |
| (c) | " | 492 | " 507 " |
| (d) | " | 528 | " 560 " |

In conclusion, I should like to make it clear that in writing this article I am not advocating the replacement in the concert repertory of the Schumann originals by Mahler's versions. What I suggest is only occasional performances of the latter so as to enable critics and public to judge for themselves. I appeal to enterprising conductors.

THE GREAT AND THE POPULAR IN DVORAK.

DVORAK'S universality of output is as staggering as Mozart's. Like the Salzburg master, he gave us, with his 150 odd works, a full measure of everything. Not that universality, though always remarkable, is in itself a sign of greatness. Were it so, Hugo Wolf would be a dwarf and Spohr a giant in musical stature. Yet in Dvořák's case this universality was the manifestation of an elemental musical mind, a mind that was endowed with the rare gift—the parallel with Mozart is again noteworthy—of fully appropriating every conceivable musical form to its own purpose. From song to opera, from vocal duet to oratorio and cantata, from instrumental solo to symphony and chamber music. To fill these forms with music that, even at its least inspired moments, bears the stamp of true musicianship, to range over them with supreme mastery, is surely a sign of a strong musical personality.

The only question is : where does this personality reveal its full stature ? Where is the maximum result of Dvořák's creative powers to be found ? Undoubtedly in his instrumental music. True, in order to draw a full and round picture of his musical genius one would have to consider such works as the "Stabat Mater," the "Biblical Songs," the "Gypsy Songs" and, perhaps, one or the other of his later operas, such as "The Devil and Kate" and "Rusalka," all of which shed a revealing light on the composer's vocal and dramatic style at its most characteristic. But apart from Dvořák's own admission that words, libretti and literary programmes were generally felt by him as a hindrance rather than a stimulus, internal evidence goes to prove that it is the medium of instrumental music, in particular the cyclic forms of symphony and chamber music, in which Dvořák freely unfolds all the characteristic aspects of his creative genius. It is significant, too, that he started his career with several chamber music works and two symphonies, and that throughout his life he remained faithful to these types of composition, returning to them, after frequent excursions into other fields, at more or less regular and comparatively short intervals.

The chief roots of his instrumental style are twofold : one is the instrumental music of the Viennese classical school, the other the folk-music of his native country and certain other

Slavonic nations To the first Dvořák owed what I would generally call the more intellectual aspect of his style: his adherence to the sonata-form, his firm handling and his sure grasp of its architectural problems, his highly-developed sense of formal balance, weight and proportions and, last but not least, the technique of symphonic development and thematic elaboration. The second great influence acted as a strong fertiliser on his melodic and rhythmic imagination. It affected the more instinctive part of his musical nature. The predominantly sensuous character of his music, the frequent change between the extremes of wild boisterousness and gloomy wistfulness (this *dumka* element is also noticeable in works which are not avowedly cast in that Slavonic form), the broadness and directness of his melodies, all point to his close link with folk-music. And so does the robust and rustic vitality of his rhythmic language. These general characteristics have their counterpart in certain technical peculiarities, of which the pentatonic build of many of his melodies and the use of certain Czech dance rhythms are the most obvious. Of subtler effect, and organically fused into the formal design, are the semitonally rising sequences—a typically Slavonic trait of purely melodic, and thus probably Oriental, origin which is diametrically opposed to the all-pervading tonic-dominant and essentially harmonic relations in Western music. It is in the fusion of such and similar alien elements with the classical forms and his personal idiom that a great part of the charm and attraction of Dvořák's instrumental works lies.

There were, admittedly, other influences at work with him—for instance, certain Wagnerisms of his harmonic and orchestral style, and the programmatic nature of his concert overtures and symphonic poems in which Dvořák took a leaf out of Liszt's book. Yet these influences were of a superficial character. A far deeper impression on his instrumental music was made by his friendship with Brahms. Brahms may have envied his younger contemporary the freshness, spontaneity and the seemingly inexhaustible fount of his melodic invention. Dvořák, for his part, must have clearly recognised the superiority of the German composer's workmanship, the concentration and logical nature of his instrumental style, not to mention the deeper emotional and intellectual significance of his music altogether. Dvořák's great impressionability, combined with his great gift of quickly assimilating foreign influences, served him well when it came to digest the lessons learnt from Brahms. The ripest fruits of this association were two works which stand out from the rest of Dvořák's

music · the Piano Trio in F minor and the Symphony in D minor, Op. 70. Both works are remarkable for two things. One is the emotional power and depth of expression, the other the large-scale formal treatment and the concentrated and closely-knit texture. This is not the popular Dvořák we know from the Slavonic Dances, the F major Quartet and the Fourth and Fifth Symphonies. It is as if in these two works Dvořák had lifted the veil that covered the deeper recesses of his musical personality, and allowed us a glimpse into its innermost secrets. The daemonic drive of this music, its wild and defiant mood, its threatening attitude of challenge, are something new and unexpected in this composer. And nowhere before or after did he reach the same cogent logic and inevitableness as he did here.

These two works deserve the epithet "great" without any qualification. In the face of such music one cannot help suspecting that in many of his other instrumental works—they are those by which Dvořák is best known all over the world—the composer was often inclined to follow the line of least resistance, to write for the most part pleasing, racy and tuneful music, music that was certain to catch the ear of great international audiences but that did not issue from that depth of feeling of which the F minor Trio and the D minor Symphony were born. Moreover, Dvořák's popular Fourth and Fifth Symphonies, and the Quartets in F, A flat and G stand on a lower technical plane. Their texture is looser, the course of the music somewhat casual and the consistent thematic development which one admires so much in the F minor Trio and the D minor Symphony is often supplanted by the principle of stringing together new and contrasting themes and motives.

In saying this I do not deny the merits and qualities of Dvořák's more popular instrumental music. After all, it was the popular national vein in Dvořák that drew—perhaps to a larger extent than Smetana's efforts did—the attention of the world at large to the existence of an autochthonous Czech music. Yet it is significant that the more obvious nationalistic traits are missing from his best music. It is national, to be sure, but national in the same sense that Schubert's C major Symphony is Austrian and Elgar's "Enigma" Variations are English. It is a nationalism that has been thrown into the melting-pot together with the composer's individuality, and the result is an amalgam in which the two constituent elements are no longer clearly discernible.

DVORAK'S CHURCH MUSIC.

WHETHER musician or music lover, we are all inclined to see Dvořák's sole significance in his achievements as a composer of orchestral and chamber music. It is chiefly here, so we feel, that his genius attained its happiest and most consummate form of artistic expression. Dvořák's work in other fields such as opera and church music is commonly regarded as a sideline which does not seem to matter in the picture one has formed of his music. Needless to say that this attitude—however understandable in view of the fact that Dvořák's instrumental music receives a far greater number of performances than his other works—does not do full justice to the composer. It is true that his operas and his church music represent only sidelines in his prolific output, but they are sidelines that cannot be missed if we are to see his art in its true and full light. This is said in no spirit of antiquarianism. For Dvořák's church music, or, to draw a wider circle, his religious music, includes works that for the sheer beauty of their invention and the sincerity of their feeling and their expression, can bear comparison with the best of his instrumental music. The place of such works as the "Stabat Mater," the Requiem Mass and the "Biblical Songs" is not on the shelves of a music library, but in the live atmosphere of the concert hall.

It is significant that from the period of his maturity until the last years of his life—though his last work of a religious character, the "Biblical Songs," was composed in 1894, as late as 1902 the composer played with the idea of writing sacred oratorios such as "St. Adalbert" (which was to form a *pendant* to his "St. Ludmila"), "Nazareth" and "Golgotha"—religious music held Dvořák's attention almost continually. There were only comparatively short intervals between the eight compositions of this genre which include four major works.* This may be read as a proof that despite

* Their dates of completion were —

- 1877 Stabat Mater, Op. 58
- 1878 Hymnus ad Laudes in Festo S.S. Trinitatis
(no opus number).
- 1879 149th Psalm, Op. 79.
- 1886 St. Ludmila, Op. 71.
- 1887 Mass in D, Op. 86
- 1890 Requiem Mass, Op. 89.
- 1892 Te Deum, Op. 103.
- 1894 Biblical Songs, Op. 99.

the fact that some of them were *pièces d'occasion*, having been commissioned and written for special events such as the oratorio "St Ludmila" and the Requiem Mass for the respective choral festivals at Leeds and Birmingham, the Mass for the consecration of a chapel at Luzan in Bohemia, and the "Te Deum" for the great celebration of the Columbus Centenary at New York, the setting of religious music meant to Dvořák more than a mere convention to which almost every nineteenth century composer of the front rank was expected to pay his tribute. In fact, we feel with most of his religious music that it was the artistic expression of a sincere and deep-rooted religious devotion. Dvořák's attitude toward the Catholic religion and all that it implies was that of a simple and humble man. Of peasant origin, he accepted the dogma of the Church unquestioningly and without reserve. (One is here reminded of Anton Bruckner, with whom Dvořák seems to have had a number of characteristics in common.) His was not Beethoven's metaphysical searchings, nor Brahms' pessimism, nor could he see in the missal and other liturgical texts the human drama that Liszt and Verdi saw in them. His belief in God was implicit, direct, and elemental—the result of his upbringing and his unsophisticated mind. His conduct of life and his various remarks on the subject of God and religion testify to this attitude. His religious music is the true mirror of it. All the rich resources of his art he pressed into service to give expression to his profound feelings of devotion. His approach to sacred music was not that of the Protestant church composer. Austerity, restraint, and rigour of expression were not part of his aesthetic tenets. On the contrary, warmth and sensuous beauty of melody, imaginative harmonic writing and richness of orchestral colours are here just as much in evidence as they are in his secular works. This brought upon Dvořák the charge of writing music that transgressed the proper bounds of devotional music, and, hence, was no longer religious in the conventional sense of the word. Whatever the justification of this charge, Dvořák might have consoled himself with the fact that a similar criticism was levelled, at one time or another, at Haydn, Beethoven, Schubert, and Verdi, whose sacred style did not fundamentally differ from the style of their secular works. In fact, this aspect of worldliness was part of the tradition in the church music of the Viennese classical composers—a tradition that owed not a little to Italian influences. And if Verdi or Liszt interpreted the liturgical text in terms of an intense human drama and set it to music in which a sensuous and almost theatrical element was most conspicuous, was this

to be wondered at in view of the fact that the display and ceremonial pomp of the High Service in Catholic countries contain a strong element of worldliness and "unholy" sensuality.² Yet Dvořák never went as far as Liszt (in his earlier sacred works) or Verdi. At heart an instrumental composer, he generally felt hampered rather than inspired by words, librettos, and literary programmes. All the same, he succeeded in expressing the meaning and feeling of certain dramatic sections of the liturgical texts in a very vivid and effective way. (See, for instance, the *allegro* section in the final chorus of his "Stabat Mater," and the dramatic outcry of the chorus at the word "crucifixus" in the *Credo* of his Mass, not to speak of the many dramatic pages in the Requiem Mass and the "149th Psalm.")

Dvořák approached religious music in a strongly subjective attitude. Religious music was to him a means to express in the first place *his* feeling of devotion, *his* idea of the Deity. This subjectivism had become a postulate with the romantic composers, who, with Beethoven's "Missa Solemnis" in their minds, introduced it also in their religious music. It is no mere coincidence that the very works that bear the stamp of Dvořák's personal feelings to a marked degree—the "Stabat Mater" and the "Biblical Songs"—are also musically the best of his religious music. The "Biblical Songs" are, to my mind, an epitome of the composer's whole approach to religious music. This beautiful set of ten songs is like ten variations on the theme of God. With their moving simplicity, the warmth and spontaneity of their lyricism, their occasional touches of drama, and last, but not least, their general optimism, the composer could have given us no better and more convincing musical token of his deep and humble religiosity.

So much for the more general aspect of Dvořák's religious music. Let us now, for a moment, consider some details of its technical style. Broadly speaking, the composer may be said to be at his best when setting those sections of the liturgical text that express an intense feeling of either pathos, grief and suffering, or of drama and exultation. It is in such passages that Dvořák's inspirational powers attain their full force. This would explain the movingly expressive lyricism of the "Stabat Mater" and the "Biblical Songs," and the highly dramatic outbursts and the climaxes of the choral numbers in the Requiem Mass, the Mass in D, and the "Te Deum." On the other hand, sections of the text in which a more restrained and a more contemplative mood

prevails, show a certain falling-off of the melodic invention and spontaneity, and strike one as more or less conventional. A large-scale illustration of this characteristic feature of Dvořák's religious style is to be found in his Requiem Mass. Its second part, the words of which express on the whole a calm and restful feeling, seems musically inferior to its first part.

This brings us to the question of Dvořák's formal treatment of the liturgical text. The chief problem here was not so much the musical form of a single number—following the classical tradition, Dvořák wrote mostly set-numbers—as the division of the text in such a way that it should provide the composer with the necessary contrast and balance for the musical setting. For on this division depends the essential musical treatment such as texture, sequence of keys, choice of solo, choral and ensemble numbers, and so on. While generally adopting the traditional divisions as he found them in classical church music, in a number of details Dvořák went his own way. This shows that, though an instrumental composer in the first place, Dvořák was alive to the problems of text composition. That he tried to reconcile his fundamentally instrumental outlook with the requirements of the text is proved by his successful handling of the question of balance, contrast, and emotional weight of the various sections. As far as mood and technical treatment are concerned, there is no lack of variety in his religious music. This applies both to the order in which the musical numbers follow and to the single number itself. (Compare, for instance, in the Requiem Mass, the dramatic contrast between Nos. 3 and 4, and between the opening of No. 5 and the *Rex tremendae majestatis* section, a few pages later.) But where the "absolute" musician in Dvořák seems to have gone astray is in the thematic working out of the single numbers. He often develops his thematic material in a way that suggests his being chiefly guided by purely musical, or to be more precise, melodic considerations. He frequently resorts to such technical devices as the splitting-up of a vocal melody into its constituent motives with which he plays about in the manner of an instrumental development. Admittedly, the musical texture gains by this technique, but its dangers in a chiefly vocal composition such as church music is, are obvious. Not that Dvořák writes a difficult vocal style—his vocal lines, both of his solos and choruses, are nearly always singable, and only rarely put undue strain on the singers—but his chiefly instrumental handling inevitably led to unnecessary lengths and to over-elaborations which were not warranted by

the text. Consequently, the text had to be stretched to fit the music and the result is tedious word repetitions. This seems to me the principal reason for the rare performances of Dvořák's church music. Cuts, judiciously made, would lead here to surprising results.

The instrumental handling of vocal numbers makes it also difficult to pay sufficient attention to a more detailed musical characterisation. There are quite a number of passages where one feels that certain word-pictures would have required a more characteristic musical stressing. Instead, they are often passed over and lost in the rich texture. Yet this does not mean that Dvořák entirely lacks a sense of dramatic characterisation. For instance, in his oratorio "St Ludmila," he introduces several characteristic motives such as the motive of the "Christian Faith" (a), the motives of the "Cross" (b), and of Ludmila (c) :

EXAMPLE NO. 1



But he uses them as reminiscences rather than as *leitmotifs* in the Wagnerian sense. More advanced in this respect is his treatment of the basic motive of his Requiem Mass .

EXAMPLE NO 2



It symbolises here the idea of death and mourning and pervades the whole work, thus giving the music both thematic and spiritual unity. More frequent than his melodic are his harmonic characterisations. For the expression of pain, grief, urgency and spiritual anguish, Dvořák makes extensive use of chromatic progressions and sudden chromatic slippings as, for instance, in Ludmila's aria "O grant me in the dust to fall,"

DVORAK'S CHURCH MUSIC

EXAMPLE NO. 3



and in the beautiful orchestral opening of the *Tuba mirum*, from the Requiem Mass, where the motive Ex No 2 is semitonally stepped-up three times—a passage, by the way, that is strongly reminiscent of the opening of the “Tristan” Prelude.

As for Dvořák's treatment of the vocal parts, reference has already been made to their general singableness. His vocal texture, whether homophonic or contrapuntal, reveals a true sense for balance and general transparency, and it is particularly in the great choral numbers and solo ensembles that the composer shows his consummate skill at clear part-writing. As an example of the natural smoothness of his polyphonic style, a passage may be quoted from the *Quis est homo* of his “Stabat Mater” —

EXAMPLE NO. 4

Chris-ti mat-rem Chris-ti mat-rem Chris-ti
mat-rem Chris-ti
Chris-ti mat-rem con-fer-
mat rem Chris-ti si vi-de-ret in
ma- trem con-tem-pla-ri
ma- trem Chris-ti si vi-de-ret
pla-ri do-len-tem cum fi-li-o
tan-to sup-pli-ci-o?

In conclusion, a few words on the various influences reared as he was on the classical tradition, Dvořák saw his chief model in the church music of the classical composers, notably Beethoven, Schubert, and—this was partly due to his frequent visits to England—Handel. It was above all Handel's vigorous and powerful choral style that left its mark on Dvořák's choruses. Also composers of the romantic period such as Berlioz,* Mendelssohn, and Liszt, were not without their influence, as may be seen from certain passages in "St Ludmila," where Dvořák seems to have taken various hints from the "Elijah" and the "Legende von der Heiligen Elisabeth." Wagner's influence, which was strongest in Dvořák's early and very late periods, here manifests itself chiefly in certain harmonic formulæ, particularly in progressions of secondary sevenths (See, for instance, the striking use of the so-called *Tristan* chord in the *Credo* of the Mass, a few bars after letter G; and the opening of No 1 of the "Biblical Songs.") To complete this list, Verdi must also be mentioned, who was responsible for the typically Italian character of certain melodies in Dvořák's Requiem Mass†. Except for his "St Ludmila," these influences, however, never went so deep as to affect materially the true physiognomy of Dvořák's style.

But there was one influence that did go very deep with him. This was the national element of Czech folk-song. With a composer such as Dvořák, who was steeped in the national music of his country, and in whom the Czech national feeling flowed from the very roots of his whole being, the national element was bound to show itself in his religious music. For obvious reasons it is here less conspicuous than in his instrumental music and his songs. It is in the general spirit and feeling rather than in actual musical substance that this element makes itself felt. It seems to lie in the broadness, straightforwardness, and directness of the melody, and in a certain melancholy and wistfulness that lends to the lyrical passages of the "Stabat Mater" and to some of the "Biblical Songs" a characteristic Slavonic colour. All the same, there are passages where one can put one's finger on a more tangible form of musical nationalism, such as the frequent pentatonic

* So is, for instance, the principal motive in the "Quis est homo" of Dvořák's "Stabat Mater" (see Ex. 4) identical with a motive that occurs in the "Lacrymosa" of Berlioz's "Grande Messe des Morts."

† There is a very striking resemblance between Dvořák's and Verdi's opening of the "Rex tremendæ majestatis" section of their respective Requiem Masses.

turns of the melody,* certain rhythmic patterns, and the introduction of ancient Czech hymn tunes, as Dvořák did it so effectively in the great finale of his "St. Ludmila," where the chorus intones, first, the old chorale *Hospodine pomiluj ny* (a), and, then, the pentatonic church sequence (b) —

EXAMPLE NO. 5



It is true that this national feeling has given Dvořák's religious works a special distinction. Dvořák was the first Czech composer to write religious music in which the Czech people felt the breath and pulse of their own country. This was in itself a great achievement. Yet even more impressive is Dvořák's power to rise above the plane of pure nationalism and to write religious music that for its great musical beauty and its intrinsically human expression speaks the language of a universal religion — humanity. It addresses itself not to a special community, not to a special country, but to the whole world. It is this great human quality that has endowed the "Stabat Mater," the Requiem Mass, and the "Biblical Songs" with enduring value.

* It is, however, often difficult to distinguish between the pentatonism of the Gregorian Chant, motives of which are occasionally used by Dvořák, and that of Czech folksong.

BEETHOVEN'S EARLY QUARTETS.

THE depth of Beethoven's musical ideas nowhere manifests itself with stronger force than in the emotional power of his great piano sonatas, the intellectual clarity and purity of his chamber music, and the monumental epic of his symphonies. Yet one is tempted to ask whether Beethoven retained throughout his life the same amount of interest in each of these three genres. Although the works belonging to these three categories are fairly evenly distributed over the whole of his career, a rough comparison of dates will reveal a significant fact: of the three groups, chamber music seems to have been the one to which Beethoven devoted his attention longest and most steadily. Take the piano sonatas. The bulk were written before 1810, the later sonatas appearing at long intervals until 1823, when for all practical purposes Beethoven said farewell to the piano. Next come the symphonies. He did not write his First Symphony until he was nearing his thirties—if we disregard the youthful effort of the so-called "Jena" Symphony. Within the next twelve years he produced seven more symphonies, completing his Eighth in 1812. Then, however, follows a gap of eleven years until the Choral Symphony. Thus it becomes clear that there was a distinct period during which Beethoven concentrated upon the piano sonata and the symphony, and that after 1810 and 1812, respectively, his interest in these two genres showed a marked decline. A completely different picture is presented by his chamber music. No such gaps in the continuity of production are noticeable here. Throughout his life, chamber music occupied Beethoven, constantly, steadily, and with the same amount of interest, right from the time when, at the age of fifteen, he wrote his first three piano quartets up to the closing years of his career, when he crowned it with his last great string quartets. In point of fact, the last three years of his life were, to the exclusion of everything else, devoted to the work upon these quartets.

What is the explanation for this outstanding position which chamber music apparently occupied in Beethoven's work as a whole? There seem to be two chief reasons, of which the first is a purely technical one. In contrast to the medium of the piano and the orchestra, that of chamber

music with its various combinations, presented to Beethoven a vast choice and invited his adventurous spirit to explore, and experiment with, its inexhaustible possibilities of texture, balance, and colour. Naturally such experiments took a comparatively long time to ripen and produce results that would prove acceptable to the highly self-critical composer.

The other reason is of a deeper nature. It is that chamber music, as Beethoven conceived it, provided a happy medium between the strongly subjective individualism of his instrumental monologues—the piano sonatas—and the more objective and more comprehensive expression of his symphonies. Seen in this light, the whole of Beethoven's chamber music appears as a constant attempt to reconcile these two attitudes, sometimes tending to the one, sometimes to the other, until the final solution was found. This solution Beethoven found in the form of the string quartet.

The three big groups of string quartets which he wrote—Op. 18, Op. 59, Op. 74 and Op. 95, and the last five quartets—each mark the closing of a period in his general style. All the experience of, and insight into, problems of form, texture, harmony and rhythm which he had gained during such a period from work at other kinds of music, he put into his string quartets. But more than that, every phase of development, every change in his artistic and general human outlook is mirrored in them. Each of these three groups of string quartets must be taken as a technical and spiritual epitome of the works which preceded it.

Thus the six quartets Op. 18 are a faithful reflection of the Beethoven up to about the turn of the century. Technically speaking, he stood then under the influence of Haydn and, to a lesser degree, of Mozart. With his later string quartets Haydn had provided him with a fully-developed model—the cycle of four contrasting movements with the sonata form as its framework, the sectional build of themes which, while still retaining an organic unity, combined contrasting melodic and rhythmical motives and thus contained the chief element for further development and dramatic conflict; the play with unexpected modulations into remote keys; and, above all, the contrapuntal-thematic treatment of the four instruments, resulting in a texture of astonishing richness and movement.

Beethoven used Haydn's model, but he was not content to copy it tamely even in his earliest set of quartets, Op. 18. He first began further to develop Haydn's technical means so as to make them the better servants of his own individual

ideas, which were asserting themselves even during this period of apprenticeship. The chief course which this development took under Beethoven's hand—it would be entirely wrong to speak of an improvement upon Haydn's technique (which exactly served the purposes that Haydn had in mind in his later string quartets)—was in the direction of a more elaborate and, at the same time, more elastic technique of what Beethoven used in later years to describe as the “*obbligato* accompaniment.” There was, indeed, no more ideal medium to which Beethoven could apply his unsurpassed power of thematic treatment in close combination with contrapuntal devices than the string quartet with its four equal partners. Whichever of the six quartets from Op. 18 one takes for examination, one finds Beethoven grappling with the problem of enlivening and enriching the “accompaniments” by thematic motives, by ingenious part-writing, by free imitations and canons, by subtle modifications of the rhythm, and by combining different rhythmical pattern into a rhythmical “counterpoint” (finale of No. 5, and slow movement of No. 6). The choice of harmonies and of keys in modulatory passages reveals more design and purpose than do most of Haydn's and Mozart's quartets. The great technical ideal after which Beethoven was constantly striving—to transform big musical forms into organic wholes—was gradually materialising in Op. 18. As a striking instance in this respect may be quoted the finale from the B flat major Quartet. Its slow, pathetic introduction, the famous *Là Malinconia*, seems at first to be detached and to have nothing in common with the ensuing rondo. But by a most ingenious formal stroke—the use of the *Malinconia* theme to introduce the second episode of the rondo, a use all the more dramatic for the anti-climax it creates after the exuberance of the rondo theme—this introduction is made to form an organic part of the whole movement.

Yet all these technical traits were only the reflex of a mind bent upon imbuing the form of the string quartet with a more personal and more strongly individual feeling than either Haydn or Mozart ever dared to put into their quartets. Naturally, the quartets Op. 18 could not yet bear the full mark of personality and that individual character which the later Beethoven quartets possess. But they already show in parts the typically Beethovenian vigour and drive and his tendency to epigrammatic statement. If this is characteristic of the quick movements, in some of the slow movements there are already visible the contours of Beethoven's later great

cantilena with its beautifully expressive quality and its profoundly human message—as witness the slow movements of Nos 1 and 6, and the already mentioned *La Malinconia* section of the latter

The eighteenth century was fond of likening the string quartet to a “ conversation between four intelligent persons ” And indeed, the impression of a conversation in terms of music is inseparable from this kind of chamber music If with Haydn and Mozart this “ conversation ” touched only occasionally and as if by accident upon more serious, more personal and introspective subjects, with Beethoven its course began to take a deliberate turn towards such “ topics ” Again it is in the slow movements where this tendency announces itself with special emphasis, as in the wonderful second movement of the F major quartet which, according to tradition, was inspired by the tomb scene in “ Romeo and Juliet ” This aspect of Beethoven’s musical personality is shown with even greater poignancy in the first movement of the C minor quartet where the “ conversation ” is all in a sombre mood

A BEETHOVEN MOVEMENT AND ITS SUCCESSORS.

VOLUMES have been written, and will continue to be written, on the amount and importance of the influence Beethoven exercised upon his successors in the field of the symphony. Any study of this influence will, above all, have to answer two main questions. How was Beethoven's symphonic technique taken over by later symphonists? And in what light did they regard his symphonic ideas, the spiritual world that he embodied in his great works? Though the first is a technical and the second a philosophical question, the two are closely linked, for Beethoven's symphonic work is perhaps the most striking example of the idea behind the music creating and shaping its appropriate means of expression. The present article is an attempt to study and possibly answer those two questions, not in a general way, but by choosing a special case that seems in more than one respect particularly suited to such a task.

In common with other people I have often felt that certain similarities and analogies exist between the *Allegretto* of Beethoven's Seventh and the second movements of Schubert's C major and Mendelssohn's A major Symphonies. However, before starting to investigate the justice of this view I came across a remark in a recent book by Gerald Abraham* which confirmed it and, at the same time, added a third case for study by drawing attention to the second movement of Berlioz's "Harold in Italy," of which the author says that "it was obviously suggested by the corresponding movement in Beethoven's Seventh." A comparative analysis of the four movements in question makes the hypothesis highly probable that Schubert, Berlioz and Mendelssohn must all have, consciously or unconsciously, taken the Beethoven *Allegretto* more or less as a model for the corresponding movements in their respective symphonies. Considering the differences of personality, artistic temperament and style it was natural that the results should be widely different, but it is these very differences that furnish the most interesting points for analysis.

* "A Hundred Years of Music" (Duckworth, London, 1938).

As the object of this essay can be achieved only by comparison of the four movements the analysis must rest chiefly on those points which represent the *tertium comparationis*. Beethoven's *Allegretto* is in rondo-cum-sonata form :—

A—B—A—C—A—B—Coda
(A minor) (A major) (shortened) (development (only hinted at) of A) (shortened)

The movement opens and concludes with three bars of a held six-four chord, a kind of "curtain." The exposition of theme A shows a rather uncommon structure which suggests the idea of a terrace. Beethoven repeats theme A three times, the melody rising each time an octave higher. Correspondingly the scoring becomes richer and the dynamics increase until on the last repetition, the whole orchestra is employed *fortissimo*. Beethoven enriches the texture, too, by introducing, at the first repetition, a most expressive counter-melody. Thus the tremendous building-up to the climax at bar 75, is achieved not only through a mere mechanical increase of the dynamics, but by a combination of means. The increase of the sound-volume in several stages by a gradual enriching of the orchestration produces yet another result. These stages coincide with the architectural outlines, which are thus brought into sharp relief. It is as though each step of the terrace received a new and brighter colour.*

Let us look for a moment at the themes themselves :—

Ex. 1 *Allegretto* (Theme A)



Theme A is a strict period of two eight-bar sections. Beethoven seems to stress this squareness of build by regularly repeating the second section and by putting in "full stop" rests in bars 8, 16 and 24. Another characteristic of the theme

* In his "Bolero" Ravel used this device in a highly effective manner

is the rhythmic pattern ♩ ♪ ♪ ♩, suggestive of a slow

march, which pervades the whole movement. The actual tune seems to have been born out of this rhythm, as shown by bars 5 and 6, where the merely rhythmic figure crystallizes into a melodic germ-motive of dominant importance. In contrast to A, theme B has no such deep-cutting caesurae, but flows continuously without breaks. The markedly rhythmic character of the whole movement suggests a march heavily throbbing along and dominated by a sort of heroic

Ex 2 (Theme B)



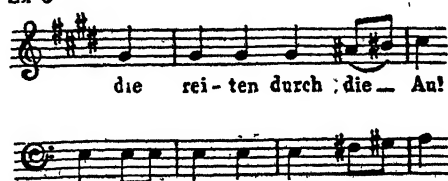
pathos. The only bright colour is provided by theme B (in A major), which has a slight hymn-tune flavour and introduces a soothing contrast. Though not marked as such this *Allegretto* is really a symphonic march of a kind Beethoven had produced earlier in the funeral marches of the "Eroica" and the piano Sonata Op 26. It appears, therefore, that Beethoven saw in the symphonic march a special vehicle for expressing his idea of relentless and inevitable fate. He was, to the best of my knowledge, the first to introduce a symphonic march with this particular significance into the symphony and sonata.*

The *Allegretto* in the Seventh Symphony is undoubtedly one of Beethoven's most beautiful and impressive movements. This was at once recognised by the public at the first performance of the work in Vienna in December, 1813, and a Viennese critic on that occasion hailed this particular movement as "the crown of the more modern instrumental music." It is thus more than probable that the outstanding qualities of the *Allegretto* induced successive composers to model one or another of their symphonic movements on its lines.

* The marches of the divertimenti, cessations and serenades of the Viennese school belong, of course, to a different category altogether.

The first to do this seems to have been Schubert with the *Andante* of his C major Symphony (1827). It is very likely that he was much impressed by this *Allegretto*, the whole character of which is curiously Schubertian. There is, for instance, a striking similarity between a passage in the song "Der Kreuzzug" and the final bars of the famous *Allegretto* tune, a similarity that is tantamount to a literal quotation. Compare the cadence in C# minor in the song with that in bars 6-8 of the Beethoven theme —*

Ex 3



The group of Leitner songs to which "Der Kreuzzug" belongs was written in 1827-28, that is, about the time of the C major Symphony. It is significant that Schubert uses this Beethoven motif in a song containing the idea of wandering and pilgrimage. About this important fact I shall have more to say later.

Let us now examine the *Andante* of the C major Symphony. Its position in the order of the movements, its key (A minor) and its time (2-4) are identical with those of the Beethoven *Allegretto*. So is, essentially, the tempo. For although Beethoven's tempo is *allegretto*, the composer is credited with remarking later that he really meant an *andantino quasi allegretto* which, in practice, comes very near Schubert's *andante con moto*. Like Beethoven, Schubert cast his movement in sonata-cum-rondo form —

A ———	B ———	A ———	C ———	B ———	A ———
(A minor)	(F major)	(shortened)	(development of A)	(A major)	(Coda)
(A major)	(D minor)			(F# minor)	

Beethoven's three-bar "curtain" is here replaced by a seven-bar introduction which shows theme A in its embryonic form. Here follow the two main themes —

* In his "Ludwig van Beethoven," Thayer draws attention to this fact, but he quotes there a less characteristic passage from the song, and Richard Capell, in his "Schubert's Songs," speaks of certain rhythmical relations between the song "Die Sterne" (1828) and the Beethoven *Allegretto*.


Ex 4 *Andante con moto* (Theme A)




Ex 5
(Theme B)




Schubert's main theme has the same strictly periodic, two-section build as Beethoven's, yet is extended by a new thought in the major key to 36 as against 24 bars of the *Allegretto* theme. To treat this gigantic theme—gigantic, of course, if we think in terms of the classical symphony—in the manner of Beethoven's "terrace," would have resulted in a monster exposition that would have entirely upset the formal balance of the movement (As it is, the *Andante* is not completely satisfactory in this respect) That Schubert, however, had something like the "terrace" in his mind is shown by his repeating theme A twice, though in a shortened form. Bars 2 and 3 of the theme clearly point to Beethoven's germ-motif (see Ex 1) and, as in the *Allegretto*, it plays an essential part here too. Theme B shows certain similarities with its "opposite number" in the Beethoven movement in that it avoids sharp caésuræ, flows more continuously than A and possesses a hymn-like character. The march element is strongly emphasized in the marked rhythm of the dotted

motives of theme A and the processional  of the accompaniment figures *

* It is worth pointing out a characteristic and, from a psychological point of view, significant difference, within the same metre, between the quaver movement in the Schubert piece, which makes for a lighter and more even flow of the music, and Beethoven's weighty  rhythm.

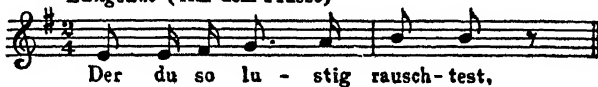
I suggest that the Schubert *Andante* is essentially a symphonic march built on the lines of Beethoven's *Allegretto*, yet with the difference that the heroic expression of the latter is here superseded by a feeling of wistful melancholy. Schubert's *Andante* stands for the same idea as Beethoven's *Allegretto*, that is, the symphonic march as the musical symbol of tragic fate, but conceived by a different mind and temperament.*

That this interpretation of the Schubert movement is not an arbitrary and wholly subjective supposition can be seen from the cycle "Die Winterreise," written the year before the C major Symphony. These songs make it perfectly clear that for Schubert the idea of marching and restless wandering was symbolic of an unhappy life. It is no mere coincidence that we find a number of motifs and rhythmical patterns in these songs which also occur, either note for note or in some modification, in the A minor movement of the Symphony. It is fairly safe to say that the symphonic movement was born out of the same despondent mood as that which produced the songs of "Die Winterreise." Richard Capell, discussing "Gute Nacht" of this cycle,† calls attention to that kinship when he says that "the general movement [of "Gute Nacht"] recalls the processional threnodies in some of the instrumental works, for instance . . . the A minor movement of the Symphony in C." Compare the monotonous and continuous

 accompaniment of "Gute Nacht" with that of the symphonic movement, or motifs taken at random, such as —

Ex 6

Langsam (Auf dem Flusse)



Langsam (Irrlicht)



Langsam (Einsamkeit)



* The same idea is to be found in the march-like movements of Mahler's symphonies, which in their gloom and melancholy seem to point directly to Schubert's influence.

† *Op cit.*

The technical relation is equally close "Der Wegweiser," like the *Andante*, is in a minor key (G minor); it has the same

movement which, exactly as in the A minor piece, dies away in almost motionless, tired crotchets. And its main motif is a sort of free augmentation of the characteristic motif in bars 2-3 of the *Andante* tune, which, in its turn, goes back to the germ-motif of the Beethoven theme —

Massig (Der Wegweiser)




Is it too bold to suggest that Schubert expressed in the symphonic movement the same idea that lies behind this simple song? If he did so—and much appears to point to it, as we have seen—then there is no doubt that the A minor movement is a symphonic march. And the notion of treating this idea symphonically and incorporating it in the Symphony must have come from Beethoven's *Allegretto*

* This would be quite in keeping with the established fact that most of Schubert's instrumental music bears a strong poetical significance.

† It is significant that Mahler used the same melodic and rhythmic pattern in the fourth song of his "Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen," a song-cycle with the same general idea and mood as "Die Winterreise."

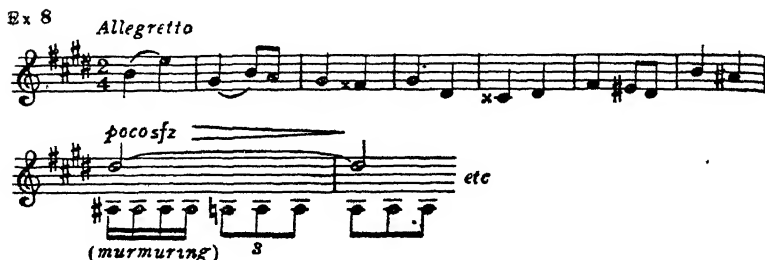
The next composer after Schubert to follow Beethoven's precedent by introducing a symphonic march into a symphony was Berlioz. He did this first with the "Marche au supplice" of his "Symphonie fantastique". Apart from the mere fact, however, that it is a march in the form of a symphonic movement, there seems to be no relation between this "Marche" and the corresponding movements in Beethoven's "Eroica" or Seventh Symphony. Yet it may be that the generating idea of the "Eroica," the artist as hero—in Beethoven's conception the representative of an ideal humanity—had something to do with Berlioz's grotesque "Episode de la vie d'un artiste". In his "Harold in Italy" (1834), however, we do find a close relation with Beethoven's Seventh. The *allegro* section of Berlioz's first movement, "Scènes de mélancolie, de bonheur et de joie," with its vivacious 6-8 theme, corresponds very nearly to the 6-8 *vivace* of Beethoven's first movement. Similarly, the finale of the "Harold" Symphony, "Orgie de Brigands," a furious *allegro frenetico*, seems to be modelled on the lines of Beethoven's fourth movement, the main characteristic of which is wild frenzy and excessive energy*.


Let us now turn to the "Marche de Pèlerins" in the "Harold" Symphony. Like Beethoven's *Allegretto*, it is a second movement and an *allegretto* march. Apart from this, little else seems at a first glance to point to the Beethoven movement. Its structure is different, being in true march form with a sort of trio (the "Canto religioso" section); it is in the major (E and C major), and as regards mood, its superficial religiosity is poles apart from Beethoven's profundity. More about this will be said later. Nevertheless, there are enough important points of resemblance which would substantiate my theory. Like Beethoven, Berlioz opens and concludes the movement with a "curtain" of sustained chords; the first theme is in strict periodical form and square-cut, only that Beethoven's "full-stop" rests are here filled in with the so-called murmuring of the pilgrims. The chant-like

tune itself moves along in heavy, monotonous ;

a rhythm that is kept up throughout the movement, just as in the Beethoven *Allegretto* :—

* It is interesting to note that Wagner, in describing this Beethoven finale, actually used the word "orgies" when he said that "here the purely rhythmical movement, so to speak, celebrates its orgies."



Again, the codas of the movements are strikingly alike. Both die away *pianissimo* and split the rhythmic pattern of the main theme—the *Allegretto* , and the “Marche”

 It will be remembered that Beethoven's second

theme had a somewhat hymn-like character. Now Berlioz's second theme—that of the trio—is a “Canto religioso”. This, of course, was dictated by the programme. But is the analogy with Beethoven just a mere coincidence?

Further, a good deal in the formal structure of the exposition of the “Marche” points to the “terrace” of the Beethoven *Allegretto*. Though Berlioz does not repeat the theme, he does something very much the same in order to get the effect of Beethoven's “terrace”. He follows the theme by a chain of melodic variants which, however, retain the original rhythmical pattern, and he gradually enriches the scoring up to the climax. And, like Beethoven, with his expressive counter-melody, he effectively introduces as a counterpoint from bar 64 onward the augmented “Harold” theme from the first movement, thus enriching the texture melodically too.*

But there is a fundamental difference between Berlioz's way of “scoring” the *crescendo* in order to reach the climax and Beethoven's architectural scoring. Berlioz is not concerned to bring the architectural outlines into sharp relief

* Though the introduction of the Harold theme is dictated by the programme, the analogy with Beethoven's procedure shows that Berlioz is employing a purely musical device that can be understood without reference to his programme. This is one of the many examples which go to prove that Berlioz, though he got most of his inspirations from non-musical (literary) sources, followed established musical laws in the working-out of his material.



by means of an instrumentation in which the changes are mainly conditioned by the structural plan of his music. The theme and its variants are given chiefly to the strings while the wind add ever-changing colours to the sequence of "scenes" in the programme. The determining factor in Berlioz's scoring is its pictorial element, which contrasts sharply with Beethoven's much less imaginative, architectural handling of the orchestra.* Yet one advantage of Beethoven's scoring lies in that it secures, *per se* and practically without the aid of the conductor, a natural *crescendo* to the climax. Highly coloured and varied as Berlioz is, it helps little in producing a gradual dynamic increase. Berlioz seems to have been aware of this, for he expressly demands the aid of the conductor when he advises him in the score at the beginning of the "Marche": "Si deve eseguire questo pezzo crescendo poco a poco fin al forte ed allora diminuendo a poco fin alla fine." If the *crescendo* had been "scored," this remark would have been unnecessary.

Another far-reaching difference already referred to lies in the functions of the symphonic march in Beethoven and Schubert on the one hand and in Berlioz on the other. Whereas the Viennese composers saw in the symphonic march the musical symbol of an all-embracing human idea—life as a tragic pilgrimage—the Frenchman drops that conception and puts in its place a superficially religious idea represented by the march and chant of pilgrims.

* * *

We now turn to our last example. Mendelssohn's "Italian" Symphony, which, like "Harold in Italy," seems to have been modelled in three of its four movements on Beethoven's Seventh. The key is A major, the *allegro vivace* first movement in 6-8 time reminds one very much of the corresponding movement in the Beethoven Symphony, and its finale, the "Saltarello," is a wild, exuberant dance movement exactly like Beethoven's *allegro con brio*. And there is some local colouring in both the finales—Hungarian and Russian in Beethoven's and Italian in Mendelssohn's. Yet a much closer relation exists between the second movements of the two symphonies. We know that the "Italian"

* The orchestral style of Liszt, Wagner, Strauss and Debussy belongs to the pictorial order, while that of Schumann, Mendelssohn, Brahms, Bruckner and Mahler follows more or less Beethoven's line of scoring.

Symphony was inspired by impressions the composer gained during a visit to Italy in 1830-31, and that its second movement, like Berlioz's "Marche" in the "Harold" Symphony, is a march of pilgrims to Rome, the march element being clearly marked in the dull steady tramp of the accompaniment figures—again a symphonic march as second movement of a symphony. Like Beethoven's, it stands in a minor key and has, to all intents and purposes, the same tempo. Its *andante con moto* is practically the *andantino quasi allegretto* of the Seventh. Though the time is 4-4, the rhythm is actually *alla breve*, for the music moves along in weighty  in their duration corresponding very nearly to that of the  in the Beethoven movement. The march is cast, however, in free sonata form with an incomplete recapitulation —

A ————— B ————— C ————— B ————— Coda
 (D minor) (A major) (development of A) (D major)

A short motif from a bridge-passage between theme A and B represents the "curtain" with which the piece opens. Theme A is, like Beethoven's first subject, a strict period, square-cut and showing the same "full-stop" rests to underline the caesurae —

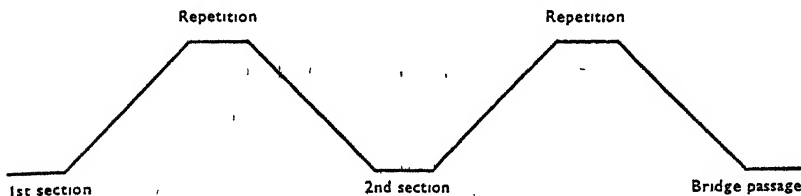
Ex 9



The exposition of theme A follows Beethoven's "terrace," the two eight-bar sections of the theme being both repeated separately (Beethoven repeats only the second), and the melody rises an octave higher with each repetition. At the same time a two-part counterpoint on the flutes is added. The result is much as in the Beethoven *Allegretto*—a natural increase of the sound-volume and a brightening of the orchestral colours. But Mendelssohn does not go on repeating as Beethoven does. He is content with building a two-storey terrace, as it were, instead of Beethoven's four-storey one. Nor has he in mind a *crescendo* on Beethoven's lines. On the contrary, the dynamic curve that started with the repetition,

A BEETHOVEN MOVEMENT AND ITS SUCCESSORS

an octave higher, of the first section of A is reduced to zero again by the "low" scoring of the second section —



But it becomes clear, that Mendelssohn's principle of scoring is here an architectural one, for his instrumentation follows in the main a structural plan and is designed with a view to stressing the architectural outlines.

Two points in this neatly-built exposition betray Mendelssohn's dominant weakness his formalism. First, the scoring of the two sections of theme A are exactly the same, and so are those of their repetitions, secondly, the counterpoint that Mendelssohn introduces on the flutes is a mere filling in with dry, lifeless lines (What a contrast to Beethoven's beautifully expressive counter-melody!) But this should not stand in the way of our appreciation of the purity and shapeliness of the movement as a whole.

Though Mendelssohn had apparently modelled his movement on the lines of Beethoven's *Allegretto*, we are again reminded by it of what has already been said of Berlioz's "Marche". Mendelssohn writes a symphonic march but fails to imbue it with the profound feeling of its prototype. Beethoven's heroism is replaced by a sweet religious sentiment, much more genuine than Berlioz's, but lacking that overwhelming urge which characterises the symphonic marches of the greater master.



ELGAR AS SYMPHONIST.

WHEN a composer settles down to writing a symphony he means business of the first musical importance. Beethoven has taught us this, and ever since we have, rightly or wrongly, come to regard the symphony as the most highly organised of our instrumental forms—a form that puts the whole of the composer's creative faculties to the severest test, that challenges all the resources of his intellectual and emotional powers. In short, to write a symphony is to give the totality of both one's musical experience and one's artistic personality. This has been essentially the view of most symphonic writers since Beethoven. It was also Elgar's view.

His two symphonies are conceived on a grand scale, and one feels a strong and rich musical personality behind the music, speaking a markedly personal language. There is an abundance of beautifully poetic and truly inspired moments, and the treatment of the orchestra shows the hand of a composer used to thinking in orchestral terms. Yet on examining the two works more closely, one begins to wonder whether Elgar's method or rather, the particular cast of his musical mind, was altogether that of a born symphonist. The symphonies suffer from one basic weakness—the essentially rhapsodic nature of Elgar's conception. In other words, instead of letting the music grow—one of the fundamental characteristics of the symphonic form—the composer is inclined to string together the various structural sections in a more or less kaleidoscopic way. They do not seem to flow naturally into each other and the cogent logic of an organic sequence is at times completely lacking. This is not a failing that owes its origin to any purely technical deficiency. That Elgar knew how to handle the symphonic technique, particularly as regards thematic treatment, is amply shown in the orchestral parts of his oratorios, the First Symphony (his use of the motto-theme is most varied and ingenious), and in his "Falstaff". His formal failing is due fundamentally to the particular cast of his musical mind. Elgar was a lyricist with marked programmatic tendencies. He was thus a romantic composer of the Schumann type. (It is significant that he confessed to a special liking for that composer's music, particularly his symphonies.)

If we want to find the essential Elgar we shall do so in the "Enigma" Variations, which show Elgar at his orchestral best, and represent the quintessence of his instrumental style : a series of self-contained contrasting mood-pictures permeated with a strong lyrical feeling and illustrating a certain inner programme · the different personalities of his various friends. Does this not remind us of Schumann's "Carnaval," the "Davidsbundler" and the "Etudes Symphoniques" ? Is not Elgar's approach essentially the same ? I suggest that, broadly speaking, the character and the formal type of the "Enigma" Variations return in the symphonies in more or less ingenious disguise.

For "mood-pictures" read "structural sections," which are, however, strung together by symphonic methods, and you arrive at the type of Elgar's symphonic movement. This chiefly accounts for its rhapsodic character. It also accounts for another typical feature · the continuous rise and fall of Elgar's emotional curve. His symphonic movements are given a special stamp by these unsteady and often very sudden and dramatic changes of mood, which are particularly disturbing in those movements which are the chief carriers of the symphonic thought, the first and last. With Elgar the essentially epic character of the symphony changes to a lyrico-dramatic one. And to assume an underlying programme which to a certain extent conditions and directs the character, treatment and formal course of the music, is not only justified in view of the programmatic nature of most of Elgar's compositions, but is also the corollary of internal evidence. Despite the fact that Elgar upheld Brahms' Third Symphony as the perfect model of symphonic writing because of the absence from it of any clue to what was meant, he gave us in his own E flat Symphony a clear indication of its spiritual meaning by prefacing it with a quotation from Shelley, while the character of General Gordon was, on his own admission, the inspiration of the central mood of his planned first symphony, though whether this was the later Symphony in A flat is uncertain.

Once we have recognised these tendencies and the failings to which they lead, we shall have cleared the chief obstacle to a more positive appreciation of Elgar's symphonic style. His symphonies are certainly no model symphonies. Yet what lends them an indisputable distinction is their very personal language, particularly as regards their melodic style. There is no mistaking those typical Elgarian curves of rising and falling intervals with their preference for wide upward leaps, the rising sixth forming here a special feature. Elgar's melodic

gift seems to unfold its greatest richness in two special types of phrase—the melody which, by its fiery *élan* and its overflowing exuberance, takes you, as it were, by the scruff of the neck (see the very beginning of the E flat Symphony), and the quietly lyrical line imbued with yearning, wistful expression. It is particularly with this second type that Elgar the melodist scores over Elgar the symphonist. There is no more beautiful example of this than the slow movement of the A flat Symphony, with its characteristic string writing. (It is, incidentally, the strings—the most flexible and most expressive group of orchestral instruments—that give Elgar's orchestra its cachet.)

It is in such passages that what has been termed the Englishness of Elgar's musical genius seems to manifest itself with singular intensity. These passages are the first to arrest the attention of the non-British musician, and it is interesting to see how some of the younger school of British composers have been influenced by this Elgarian trait, witness the slow movement of Ireland's Piano Concerto (particularly the string passages), Bliss's Clarinet Quintet and Music for Strings and the slow movement of Vaughan Williams' F minor Symphony. This English element in Elgar is a striking proof that national characteristics in music need not necessarily originate in folk-song. There is nothing folk-songish about Elgar's lyrical phrase, yet it will always be felt as something intrinsically English. Nationalism in music is not always a matter of literal quotation of folk-song motives, or the absorption, however complete and organic, of folk-song elements into one's personal style. It often expresses itself in a certain characteristic attitude of the musical mind, in a certain way of musical thinking and of tackling technical problems. This higher and more subtle kind of musical nationalism is the kind we meet in the Elgar symphonies. It does not lie only in the shape and the expression of Elgar's lyrical phrases. It is also felt in those quiet moments which Elgar is fond of introducing after his great emotional outbursts, moments in which the music reaches a maximum of beautifully poetic expression tinged with wistfulness. The foreign musician is perhaps better able than the Englishman to detect these national elements; they strike him at once as something new and different from the symphonic style of German music. True, the symphonies betray certain influences, notably Wagner's in the orchestration and Brahms' in the symphonic texture. Yet for all that, they represent for me the first great examples of English symphonic thinking.

SCHUBERT'S EARLY SYMPHONIES.

ARE we to blame Schubert or ourselves for the fact that of his nine symphonies only the last two are regularly heard, with occasional performances of the No 5 in B flat thrown in as a reminder of the rather obscure existence of the less fortunate sisters? It is true that, broadly speaking, none of Schubert's early symphonies reaches the inspirational level of the two masterpieces of his mature period. Yet even a casual glance over these six works shows a multitude of details that sound an individual note and point to great things to come—here a lovely lyrical phrase, there an arresting harmonic turn, now a passage with beautiful instrumental colour, now an unexpected modulation that, with a stroke, takes you to remote tonal regions.

The fact, however, remains that these six symphonies are works that the great public does not take much notice of. Their importance seems to lie less in the things they achieve than in the things they promise. In other words, they shed an illuminating light upon the composer's development as a symphonist. And it is chiefly from this angle that a study of their style will yield most interesting results. What it makes clear above everything else is that Schubert was from the very first work—the Symphony in D—striving after the realisation of a symphonic ideal the nature of which was closely bound up with his particular musical genius. This ideal was to infuse into the essentially epic type of the Beethoven symphony a strong element of lyricism. Not that Beethoven's symphonies do not contain lyrical elements. But the dynamic character of Beethoven's musical personality never allowed them to obtrude and to interfere with the markedly forward movement of his symphonic ideas. It was different with Schubert. His was a "passive" type of musical personality and lyricism was its quintessence.

What do Schubert's early symphonies tell us about his development as a symphonist? He was sixteen when he wrote his First Symphony (1813), and only twenty-one when he had already arrived at his No 6 in C (1818). Then came a significant break of four years—if we disregard here the sketch for a Symphony in E which would have been his original

No 7—at the end of which we have the Unfinished (1822) I have mentioned these chronological dates because they disclose two important facts. One is that the first six symphonies were written in close succession and belong to a period which covers the transition from Schubert's youthful style to maturity. The other fact is the clear break in Schubert's symphonic production after No 6 and the relatively long pause before his first symphonic masterpiece appeared. What these facts suggest and what internal evidence seems to prove is that the six early symphonies must be taken together as forming one group and that they were more or less in the nature of unconscious experiment and preparation for the two big works to come. Moreover, during the interval from 1818 to 1822 Schubert's symphonic technique matured from serious but not altogether successful efforts into the great achievement of the Unfinished Symphony.

At first we see the composer following in the steps of Haydn and Mozart rather than Beethoven. His first three symphonies are typical "*spielmusik*"—pleasant, playful and rather naive music that contents itself for the most part with the weaving of attractive melodic patterns and without striking any deeper note. There is plenty of melodic invention—how could it be otherwise with this composer?—but the music as a whole lacks the clear direction, concentration and economy of its models. Schubert is inclined to cling too long to the same theme, and to retain the same rhythmic patterns for long stretches on end. Instead of development and spinning out of the thematic material there is often mere repetition in different keys.

Schubert's lyrical phrase—a static and formally self-contained element—does not lend itself readily to the "dialectic" treatment of which Haydn, even more than Beethoven, was such a master. Schubert attempts to build up his symphonic movement by lyrical expansion rather than real thematic development. Yet on the other hand, there are signs of an attempt to introduce certain individual traits into the conventional form. For instance, in contrast to the classical method Schubert makes the slow introduction an integral part of the first movement proper by letting it reappear in the recapitulation but in *allegro tempo*, as he does in the first movements of Nos 1 and 3. This integration of two different sections has its counterpart in the tendency to treat the bridge-passages in the exposition rather in the manner of a development, thus aiming at a more homogeneous link between the two subjects and the epilogue. Here seems

to lie the beginning of a technique that, in the hands of Bruckner, Mahler and Sibelius, was to become a characteristic feature.

With the Fourth Symphony in C minor Schubert reaches an important milestone. For the first time he abandons the "spielmusik" type of the previous works and aims at something at once more profound and more personal in expression. He significantly gives it the title "The Tragic." There is, however, little doubt that its spiritual father was the Beethoven of the Fifth Symphony. Apart from its predominantly serious attitude, it is marked by greater concentration and clearer direction of the symphonic thought. One feels that Schubert's will to master the form and to prevent the lyrical element from becoming a brake on the forward course of the music is asserting itself with greater force than ever before. He also devotes greater care to details of texture such as enriching the inner parts and the bass line with thematic material. Altogether, the symphony represents a great advance over its predecessors. As if to relax from the grave seriousness of its mood, Schubert reverts in the subsequent work, the lovely B flat Symphony, No. 5, to the lighter type of his three first symphonies. But with the difference that here the loose texture is combined with elaborate details of harmony and instrumentation, pointing to the increased technical experience which the composer had gained in the meantime.

The following work is a disappointment. The firmer grip on the form and the clearer disposition of the material which marked the two preceding symphonies is lacking in No. 6. It is conceived on a scale larger than any of the other works, thus foreshadowing the dimensions of the masterpiece of ten years later. But some of the structural defects which I mentioned in speaking of the first three symphonies come here into prominence again. Even from the point of view of melodic invention, No. 6, with its all too obvious echoes from Rossini's overtures, compares rather unfavourably with Nos. 4 and 5. It is an unfortunate throw-back.

The general picture presented by Schubert's early symphonies is admittedly uneven. But one thing stands out: the strong lyrical quality that pervades it and that often makes one forget the shortcomings of form and texture. One wonders whether Schubert's lyrical invention would have been what it was had it been subjected to the concentration and rigour of Beethoven's symphonic methods. The early

symphonies suggest that Schubert's symphonic conception was, in certain respects, very different from Beethoven's. But he had not yet reached that stage of maturity when he was able to give it adequate expression. Up to the Sixth Symphony he was still groping after it. The fulfilment was to come in the last two masterpieces. Even here one is able to point to certain structural weaknesses. But they fade into insignificance before the incomparable lyrical beauty and the elemental grandeur of Schubert's inexhaustible power of invention.



SCHUMANN AND THE SONATA FORM.

SOME years ago *The Daily Telegraph* published an interview with Sibelius, in which the composer, among other matters, discussed the problem of the symphonic form in the post-Beethovenian era. Now the dicta of composers on the activity of their fellow-musicians, or on the subject of music in general—however interesting and stimulating—are completely one-sided and often discounted by prejudice which is explicable when we take into consideration the strong egocentric tendencies of most artists. But it does sometimes happen that artists express views which embody certain truths, arrived at intuitively and capable of proof by analysis of style and form. This is the case in the above-mentioned conversation with Sibelius. A number of years ago the present writer went into the problem of Schumann's sonata form. The result of this analytical investigation coincides pretty closely with what Sibelius had to say on the post-Beethovenian symphony. The paragraph which has significance for us here is worth quoting "Since Beethoven's time all the so-called symphonies, except Brahms's, have been symphonic poems. In many cases the composers have told us or, at least, indicated the programmes they had in mind; in others it is plain that there has been some story or landscape or set of images that the composer has set himself to depict or illustrate."

Thus Sibelius. There are two points of interest in this statement. the fixing of the period in question as "since Beethoven's time" and the observation that the symphonic poem took the place of the symphony. In other words, the form and content of the symphony since Beethoven changed to such an extent that according to Sibelius the symphonies of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are no longer symphonies in the classical sense. Sibelius speaks of a "story, landscape or set images" which step in to replace the earlier conception of the symphony, thus estranging this form from its true nature. (Sibelius's own symphonies belong to this category.) At the same time Sibelius recognises that with Beethoven the evolution of the classical symphonic form had reached a definite point, and that henceforth its further course followed along lines which led to form and matter differing from those of the classical period.

How, then, may we account for this change in the character of the symphonic form? If we see in the musical forms not abstract structural schemes—as some people are inclined to think—but organisms which are subject to the same laws of growth, maturity and decay as are other forms of life, this much must become clear: the climactic point in the evolution of any given form is that comparatively short period during which all the inherent potentialities of this form in its chrysalis stage are brought out to full blossom. This is the period we call “classic.” Thus we have had classic epochs at various times. Palestrina, for instance, was the classical composer of vocal polyphony, Bach, of instrumental polyphony, and the Viennese composers at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries, the classical masters of instrumental homophony (symphony and sonata).

The same applies to the romantic style. Romantics lived at all periods, not only in the nineteenth century. The romantic style is the loosening of the bonds that holds the classic form. An organism (classical form) begins to dissolve into isolated parts, which, in themselves, may harbour the seed of new developments as we find, for example, in the evolution of the motet to the *ricercare* and the fugue, or of the symphony to the symphonic poem. Viewed from this angle, classic and romantic styles will be found at all periods and are typical of an evolutionary process in which phases of a more static nature (classical periods) and a more dynamic one (romantic periods), will always be discernible.

After these general considerations let us now turn to the particular problem of the sonata form, the form of the classical and romantic symphonies. The reader might ask why I have chosen to study this problem in relation to Schumann rather than Brahms, Bruckner, Mahler and Sibelius, with whom it appears to play a much greater part than with Schumann. The reason is that the modifications which Schumann introduced in the classical sonata form, represent the first persistent attempts on the part of a post-Beethovenian composer to make this classical form serve romantic ideas.

What are these new ideas? Do they really differ so radically from those of the immediately preceding period? I said a moment ago that the classical period represents the highest point in the evolution of a given style and form. In our case it is the Viennese classical school which developed the sonata form to perfection whether in the individual movements or the whole cyclic plan. The Haydn of the

quartets since 1781 and the Mozart of the three great symphonies of 1788 are such culminating points. But the most perfect consummation was arrived at with the Beethoven of round about 1802-12—witness the “Eroica” and Fifth Symphony, the Rasoumovsky Quartets, the Waldstein Sonata, and the “Appassionata.” This is the “classical” Beethoven. What he wrote later did considerably gain in depth and meaning, but he never achieved the same conciseness and compelling logic of the works of his middle period. The reason was that for Beethoven the question of *meaning* continually grew in importance. This probably had been in his mind all the time and he persistently sought—in letters and in conversation—to give programmatic explanations of the meaning of his music. But in his middle period a perfect combination of form and content reigned supreme—the classical balance. It is for this reason that the works of this period must be regarded as the most consummate examples of the classical sonata form. The modifications he introduced later were all natural results of his attitude towards the problem of meaning. Deliberate archaisms such as the use of fugue and canon in the sonata, the increase of the number of movements, frequent changes of rhythm and tempo within one and the same movement, programmatic headings, the use of words—all show how programmatic ideas grew in importance while the form gradually changed.

This was the starting-point of the romantic composer for whom the question of meaning carried far more significance than did purely musical considerations. The classical balance was thereby upset. Already with Schubert the discrepancy between form and content began to become noticeable. With Schumann the tendency to place content above form becomes more and more pronounced. Most of Schumann's compositions are based on some poetic or literary idea. Certain mental images—Sibelius's set of images—which are to be regarded as the prime source of inspiration, precede the musical invention. These images almost always possess a definite character—that of a “*Stimmung*.” The musical form in which these “*Stimmungen*” or moods are best expressed is the character piece the origin of which may be traced back to Beethoven's “*Bagatelles*.” The character piece was Schumann's own proper domain. Only thus can we explain why he employs the simple binary and ternary forms so frequently in his larger piano cycles. These forms permit him to place disconnected mood or character sketches side by side. This is not the result of coincidence, for the “*Stimmung*,”

which is by its nature a self-contained complex of feelings, demands such closed and static forms as the Lied form. Opposed to it is the sonata form. Movement, and not repose, is its chief characteristic. It is a *dynamic* form which derives its impetus from the contrast between the first and second subjects. It thus forms the very antithesis of the *static* Lied form. It is here that Schumann stands at the parting of the ways. He comes from the realms of the romantic character piece with its typical song form. Hence, the fact that all his compositions in sonata form (piano sonatas, chamber music, symphonies, concertos and overtures) contain elements of the Lied form which are alien to the nature of the sonata form.

It would take us far beyond the scope of this article were I to go into analytical details. I must here content myself with a few more general points to prove the truth of the above statement. Most of Schumann's first subjects consist of themes of a song-like and self-contained character, e.g., the first movements of the Piano Concerto, the Symphony in B flat, and the Piano Sonata, Op. 22. The themes are here clearly bounded and thus defy being spun out. The contrast with the themes of the second subject which, by virtue of its more lyrical character, is cast in a self-contained form, is thus lost. In other words, the dramatic conflict between the two subjects, a conflict that is part of the very nature of the classical sonata form, is thus no longer possible. Still more noticeable is this in the development section, in which this conflict comes to a head. The technique of the classical development consists in splitting up the chief themes into their constituent motives, which are now contrasted and combined to form new associations. A continuous change takes place in the development section, which also implies a continuous harmonic and modulatory flow. Hence it becomes clear that self-contained lyrical ideas cannot find a proper place here, for they would by their very nature cause an interruption of this never-ending stream and act as a powerful brake.

On examining Schumann's treatment of the development section from this angle, we shall find two typical phenomena. Instead of developing the theme in the classical manner, Schumann transposes it, mostly in its entirety, to various keys. The transposition takes the place of a true development. It is once again the self-contained form that proves itself master of the development section, a fact that can frequently be observed also with Schubert (*cf.* the first movement of his Piano Trio, Op. 100). The other phenomenon is the appear-

ance of new self-contained sections with a marked character of their own. They strike one as independent structural units. This sort of development is new. Certain poetical notions cause Schumann to interpolate a self-contained section of a new character into just the very part of the sonata form that can bear it least, e.g., in the first movement of Op. 17, at "Im Legendenton," in the first movement of Op. 54, at "Andante espressivo," and in the first movement of Op. 63, at "Tempo I, nur ruhiger." This treatment leads harmonically to a too firm establishment of new tonalities, with the result that the modulatory flow of the development is thus broken and often brought to a standstill altogether. Other devices could be mentioned, all originating in the song-like character of Schumann's sonata themes. The quoted examples, however, will perhaps suffice to make clear Schumann's fundamental departure from the classical canons of the sonata form.

The music of the nineteenth century is generally characterized by the fact that the composer derives his chief inspiration from literary and poetical ideas. This applies to Schumann with particular force. It led him to try to weld the Lied form with the sonata form. He sought to build the great form by putting together small self-contained units without, however, possessing the necessary power to amalgamate them into an organic whole. Schumann's sonata form does not *grow*, but is *put together*. He felt himself that the sonata form was not the given medium for his musical ideas. To quote his own words: "Isolated beautiful examples of this form will certainly come to light now and then—and have done so—but it seems that this form has already run its life's course" (1839).

If Sibelius speaks of "so-called symphonies," which are not symphonies, and Schumann describes the sonata form as having "run its life's course," it means essentially the same thing: the dying-out of a form that was born of purely musical considerations and reached its highest point of perfection in the works of Beethoven's middle period. The introduction of literary, poetical and philosophical ideas into this form spelled its doom. The process of disintegration, however, was a very slow one. It reached well into the twentieth century and can be traced through Bruckner and Mahler to Schönberg's "Kammersymphonie." Schumann was one of the first to recognise the true nature of this process which, to all intents and purposes, started with him.

BARTOK'S STRING QUARTETS.

BEFORE considering the six quartets which Bartók has so far written, it may be apposite to look for a moment at their respective dates. No 1 was finished in 1908, when the composer was in his late twenties, No 2 was completed in 1917 and followed by another gap of nearly ten years, after which appeared in more or less close succession No 3, 1927; No 4, 1928, No 5, 1934, and, finally, in 1939, quartet No 6. What do these dates tell us? Obviously the fact that Bartók returned to the medium of the string quartet at different and important periods of his artistic development. (There is, significantly, a hitherto unpublished quartet, written at the outset of his career.)

We may go further and say that quartet writing has been for Bartók not a mere side-line as in the case of quite a number of leading modern composers, but an essential field of composition and perhaps the most appropriate medium to offer sufficiently wide scope to his particular genius. Indeed, on casting a wide glance over his work, so far as it is accessible in this country, one realises that notwithstanding the indisputable merits of his piano and orchestral string music, it is in the string quartets that we have to look for the essential Bartók. Free from the deceptive and cloaking colours of the orchestra and unhampered—as he is not, for obvious reasons, in the medium of the piano—in the weaving of his own complex contrapuntal fabric, Bartók seems to give the best, the quintessence of his musical thought in the string quartets.

To let them pass in review before the mind's eye is like looking at six etchings of the same face, etchings that were made at different periods of the model's life. It is, indeed, fascinating to watch how the soft and youthful contours and the reckless exuberance of the first two quartets gradually change in the following works to firmer, harder and more austere lines and how, at the same time, Bartók's expressive quality gains in power and purpose, shedding the redundant romanticism of his early years and beginning to achieve a singular directness, terseness and tautness of utterance. This gradual development, this steady mellowing are beautifully laid open in this series of six quartets. Though more than thirty years lie between the first and the last works, yet this change of style and expression does not, in retrospect, appear as radical as one might have expected in a composer who has kept abreast of the quick and often violent turns and twists

BARTÓK'S STRING QUARTETS

that have been characteristic of modern music during the period between the two world wars. To take only one example. What a profound gulf lies between Schönberg's D minor Quartet (1905) and his latest Quartet, Op. 37 (1939)! One would not ascribe these two works to the same composer. Schönberg's path from Wagnerian chromaticism to the style of his twelve-note music, gradual though it was, appears in its practical results incomparably more radical than one could claim for Bartók. This may, incidentally, be part of the reason why of the two, the Bartók of the later quartets is more popular—comparatively popular, I hasten to add—than the Schönberg of Op. 37.

I said before that in his string quartets Bartók seems to give the quintessence of his musical thought. What, then, is this thought and how does it express itself in this particular medium? To start with, what strikes one as most characteristic of Bartók's music is its singular virility. To me, this virility seems to contain a certain Beethovenian quality and there are a number of elements that appear to justify this view. There is, first and foremost, the vital energy, the relentless drive of Bartók's elemental rhythm, there is the epigrammatic terseness and the highly concentrated power of his melodic invention which is coupled with the gift of writing lines that reach out in wide-sweeping arcs and are imbued with passionate feeling, finally, there is in his architecture singular clarity and concision of build. It may be argued that Bartók's rhythm comes from quite a different province from Beethoven's, that it originates, if you like, on a lower plane—the musical folklore of South-Eastern Europe which has also left its traces on, and partly conditions, his melodic invention.

Yet the process of "sublimation," (to use a term beloved by the Freudian school of psychologists) to which Bartók has subjected this originally primitive and barbaric element, for instance, in the "Burletta" of his Sixth Quartet and the first and last movements of his No. 5, has resulted in the invention of an infinite and subtly graded variety of rhythmic patterns. (This process is already noticeable as far back as in his First Quartet.) Not the least important aspect of Bartók's great rhythmic resourcefulness is the amalgamation of such different patterns in a single line where it produces that characteristic kind of "composed" *rubato*, and the quasi-contrapuntal combination of various rhythms in the four parts—a technique that is particularly in evidence in most of the quick movements of the quartets.

Yet it would be misleading to lay stress only on this

aspect Characteristic as Bartók's rhythmic power is, it is its fusion with a genuine melodic invention that fills the texture of his quartets with blood and pulse Bartók is a born melodist. His lines *grow*; they do not bear those unmistakable traces of being, however cleverly, constructed, which one often finds in the music of the twelve-note composers. His thematic motives are true germ-motives and there is a natural rise and fall in his melody, with climax and anticlimax, resulting in a beautiful balance and shape of the line (One need only look at the first thirteen bars of Quartet No 6—the motto-theme with which every one of the four movements opens—to convince oneself of this)

Closely connected with this is Bartók's exemplary part-writing It has the cogent logic of one who is, as I have just said, a born melodist, and who approaches the contrapuntal style not as a mere exercise of his musical intellect but as a vital means of enhancing the power of his melodic thought. It is interesting to see how, through the series of the quartets, this contrapuntal technique gains in sureness of touch and in economy of means. To put it roughly, if there seem to be too many notes in the texture of his early quartets, there is hardly anything superfluous in the later works

The impression of Bartók's mature style is one of pith and moment There is also a greater evenness of mood noticeable, the movements seem somehow more centred, and particularly in his latest quartet one feels that its author has succeeded in reaching a spiritual balance within himself. This work stands out from the rest of the series by its purer style, its "classical" cut and its greater transparency of texture Even tonality is here more pronounced and there is something fascinating in this fusion of two different worlds, the traditional major-minor and the particular kind of Bartók's tonal language

Yet what seems to give the whole series its most distinguishing mark is the feeling of unity that pervades every single work I do not mean so much that unity which is achieved by more or less close thematic relations between the separate movements as, for instance, in No 4 and No 6, as rather that inner unity which is the result of a natural growth of the music throughout the whole work It is this, combined with a rare intensity of feeling and with a depth and breadth of pregnant musical thought which to me seems to reach a particular beauty and poignancy of expression in the slow movements, that mark out these quartets as perhaps the most outstanding contribution to present-day quartet writing, and as worthy successors of a great tradition.

THE SECRET OF JOHANN STRAUSS.

WAGNER hardly ever had a good word for his contemporaries, but he made one notable exception : Johann Strauss. Strauss had, in his view, "the most musical head-piece in Europe." One suspects that Wagner's unstinted praise was not quite so disinterested as it looks. Had not Strauss, long before official Vienna took any notice of the composer of "Tristan," introduced him to the most conservative of all musical cities in Europe by being the first to play excerpts from "Tannhauser," "Lohengrin" and "Tristan" to the open-air audiences in the Prater? However, we need no words of Wagner's to convince us of Strauss's musical genius. It is still with us. It lives in the "Blue Danube," the "Tales from the Vienna Woods," the "Voices of Spring," "Fledermaus" and "Gypsy Baron." More than half a century has passed since these works were written and not one of them has lost its magical grip on us. How are we to account for the lasting and undiminished appeal of this music?

Strauss left more than half a thousand dances of all kinds, sixteen operettas and an opera—a truly miraculous output and comparable only with Mozart's and Schubert's fertility. But fertility and ease of production alone are no safe key to the gates of immortality, particularly not in the field in which Strauss was working—music for entertainment. Here proficience is a *conditio sine qua non*. No other branch of music is more subject to the ever-changing fashion of the day and the fickle taste of the great masses. Successes achieved in this genre are ephemeral. We witness it every day in our popular music—the hit of to-day is stale by to-morrow and forgotten the day after. Strauss's music was no exception. Most of his waltzes, marches, galops, polkas and quadrilles were written for the day and for a special occasion, after which the almost inexhaustible tap of melodies had to be turned on again immediately to satisfy the never-ending demands of the Viennese public for something new. Nearly everything that Strauss wrote was 'Gebrauchsmusik' in the truest sense of the word—"utility music." That he meant it to be, and nothing more. Yet some of it turned out to be much more, and it is here that we have to look for part of the secret of Strauss's genius. Like Mozart's and Haydn's serenades and divertimentos, like Schubert's "Deutsche Tänze" and "Ländler," the round dozen of waltzes which

Strauss wrote at the height of his career are great because they far transgress the very narrow and workaday purpose for which they were originally intended. True, they are dance music in the first place, yet they are filled with pure and beautiful music, music of a unique charm and grace. These waltzes are a musical incarnation of that kind of hedonism that has become proverbial in all lands—the Viennese spirit, that rare amalgam of lively temperament and slight sentimentality, of *joe de vivre* and nostalgia, of an inborn ease and nonchalance. But the reverse side of the picture is indifference, laziness, slovenliness, irresponsibility, and lack of seriousness. Strauss was a typical manifestation of this spirit and he was often indifferent and slovenly in his work, too, as witness his perfunctory modulations from one waltz to another or his settings of fatuous and insipid lyrics and libretti. In the case of the latter he often did not bother to know more than the words of the song numbers—one of the reasons why only two out of seventeen works for the stage have survived.

Strauss was called the Waltz King, and justly so. The supremacy of his great waltzes remains as unchallenged to-day as it did sixty years ago. But this is not exclusively due to the spirit of the music. Vienna was rich in waltz composers such as Pamer, Gung'l, Fahrbach, Lanner, the elder Strauss and his two other sons, Joseph and Eduard. Yet what mainly distinguishes their waltzes, for all their charm and invention, from those of Strauss, is the latter's technical accomplishment, while still retaining its original dance character. Strauss transformed the waltz into a concert piece. Under his hands it became fit for both the ballroom and the concert hall. He once modestly said that his merits were weak attempts to enlarge the form that his father had handed down to him. I would add that he made the waltz a more organic whole—as far as is possible in this dance form—than any of his predecessors and contemporaries had ever done. (The single exception is Weber who, in his "Invitation to the Dance," did manage to lift the waltz to a higher plane.)

It took Strauss half a lifetime to shape that form which we now acclaim as the classical Viennese waltz. Not wholly uninfluenced by Wagner, Strauss transformed the originally rather short introduction into a kind of symphonic prelude—"symphonic" must here be taken with a pinch of salt—which is thematically linked with the suite of waltzes that follows, and which paints the general mood of the suite. A further step toward a more unified form was the extension of the coda into a summing-up of the main themes. But

where Strauss hits the bull's-eye is as a melodist. Instead of the short eight-bar phrases of his predecessors, his melodies swing now in ever-changing curves over sixteen and, at times, even twenty-four bars. True, his technique is in the manner of a mosaic rather than a development of motives, but what variety and contrast he achieves in a single melody! (For instance, Waltz No. 1 in "Roses from the South" has five, and the "Bruderlein-Schwesterlein" waltz in "Fledermaus," seven different motives.) And if we consider that any of the great waltz-cycles contains five separate waltzes, every one with its own melody—and sometimes two—the wonder of Strauss's fertility *and* quality of invention becomes all the more impressive. Equally admirable are the subtlety and delicacy with which Strauss achieves balance of rhythm and expression within this kaleidoscope of motives, to follow the rising and falling curves, the leaps and skips of his lines is like looking at a musical graph of a dancer's graceful movements.

And all that is pressed into the stereotyped ONE-two-three. But in the best of Strauss's waltzes one is hardly conscious of the mechanical thump. The rhythmic variety of his melodic patterns hides it as blossoms and leaves hide the bareness of a tree. How irritating for the dancers, but how intriguing to our rhythmic ear when Strauss upsets this tyranny of the three-fours by harnessing a two-beat rhythm on to them, as he does with such electrifying effect in No. 3 of his "Morgenblätter" and in No. 1 of his "Vienna Blood"! Besides, the typically slipshod way in which Viennese orchestras are fond of playing the accompaniment with a slight anticipation of the second beat. ♩ instead of ♩♩ tends to smooth out the rigidity of the three-four time and imparts to the music at the same time a characteristically swinging lilt.

At heart an instrumental composer, Strauss was no born writer for the stage. He cared as little for dramatic characterisation, for which he lacked the necessary technique, as he did for a careful setting of his words. Yet despite these serious shortcomings, "Fledermaus" and "The Gypsy Baron" are masterpieces of comic opera. To compare them is like comparing champagne with heavy Tokay. The one lives by a most happy union of Viennese humour and French lightness of touch (now and again Offenbach peeps out of its sparkling two-four numbers), the other by the almost Verdian vitality of its music and the colourful atmosphere of its setting. But the hall-mark of both is the waltz. To cut the waltzes would be to sap the very life-blood of their music.

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